

THE DEPICTION OF SORROW IN MIDDLE BYZANTINE ART

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INTRODUCTION*

IN the *Natural History*, the Elder Pliny presents the development of ancient painting as a series of inventions which were contributed by successive major artists. He tells us that a painter named Aristides of Thebes, a contemporary of Apelles, discovered how to depict the emotions: "He was the first of all to paint the mind and express a man's feelings, what the Greeks call ἡθῆ. . . ."¹ It was a commonplace of ancient literature to praise the artist for his accurate portrayal of emotions. Byzantine writers, who were heirs to the classical tradition of art criticism, continued to extol the artists of their own day for their skill in rendering human drama and passions.² The Byzantine critics seldom recognized qualities of reserve in the art of their contemporaries. In this respect, their observations differed markedly from those of post-medieval writers who, until recently, have tended either to scorn Byzantine art for its lifelessness or to admire it for its restraint. Modern scholars, however, have given increasing emphasis to the more emotive qualities in Byzantine art, so that the gap between the Byzantine critics and those of our own day appears to be narrowing.³ But if it is now accepted that the depiction of emotion is a genuine quality of Byzantine art, this quality has never been analyzed in detail. My first purpose in the following pages will be to provide such an analysis by examining some of the more common techniques by which Byzantine artists expressed emotion. These techniques, at their crudest, were no more than the association of certain standardized gestures of the body and casts of the facial features with particular emotional states.⁴ Although this language of sentiment in Byzantine art conveyed a wide range of feelings, from grief and fear to joy, in this paper I shall discuss only those formulae which conveyed sorrow, as this was the emotion which Byzantine artists portrayed most frequently and with the greatest intensity.

My second aim will be to set the depiction of sorrow in narrative art into a chronological framework. In particular, one major question needs to be answered: was the portrayal of human feelings an abiding concern of Byzantine artists, or was it only characteristic of specific phases? Modern scholars have

* This study is based on my Ph.D. thesis on "Truth and Topos: The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art in the Light of Ekphrastic Literature," which was submitted to Harvard University in 1973.

¹ *Is omnium primus animum pinxit et sensus hominis expressit, quae vocant Graeci ἡθῆ. . . . Naturalis historia*, XXXV, 98.

² See my previous article, "Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art," *DOP*, 28 (1974), 113f., 132ff.

³ For a general discussion of the depiction of emotion in Byzantine art, see E. Kitzinger, "The Hellenistic Heritage in Byzantine Art," *DOP*, 17 (1963), 95ff., esp. 109ff.

⁴ Brief discussions of the role of gestures in Byzantine art are found in K. Onasch, *Die Ikonenmalerei. Grundzüge einer systematischen Darstellung* (Leipzig, 1968), 74ff.; and in K. Wessel, "Gesten," *RBK*, II (1971), col. 766ff.

singled out two periods in the history of Byzantine art, the Macedonian of the tenth century and the Late Comnene of the second half of the twelfth, when Byzantine artists showed a new interest in pathos and human feelings.⁵ This paper will attempt to assess the relative contributions of these phases by tracing the formulae through which artists conveyed sorrow from antiquity to the end of the twelfth century, with particular emphasis on Middle Byzantine art from 843 to 1204.

The procedures which made up the Byzantine language of sentiment were essentially simple and easy to copy. Their stereotyped nature raises the question of the sincerity of Byzantine artists when they used these formulae. Byzantine writers have been accused of the mindless repetition of *topoi* derived from classical antiquity. The same charge might be brought against Byzantine artists. Thus, my third purpose will be to explore the function of emotive imagery in narrative art, in an attempt to discover how far the constantly recurring formulae were devoid of content and how far they were more deeply grounded in sentiment or in doctrine.

1. *Violent Gestures*

The gestures which denoted sorrow in Byzantine art can be divided into three broad categories: those which constituted a violent display of suffering; those which conveyed an inner contemplative grief; and those gestures which were ambivalent in their meaning, so that they could also signify emotions other than sorrow, such as joy or fear. In this section I shall consider gestures of the first type, through which sufferers gave full vent to their feelings.^{5a} Both classical and Byzantine writers frequently described actions of this nature, so that they are, in effect, literary *topoi*. Already in Homer, at the opening of book 18 of the *Iliad*, we hear how Achilles receives the news of the death of Patroclus, strewing his head and face with dust and tearing his hair, while his servant girls run around him beating their breasts with their hands.⁶ We frequently come across such displays of sorrow in the Greek Romances; thus, in the *Ethiopics* by Heliodorus, we read of Theagenes mourning for his beloved Charicleia, "striking his head and tearing his hair."⁷ So, too, in the twelfth-century *Rhodanthe and Dosicles*, by the Byzantine poet Prodromus, a father grieves for his daughter, "...rending his robe, cutting the hair of his head, sprinkling the top of his head with ashes, and tearing

⁵ For the Comnene period, see especially L. Hadermann-Misguich, "Tendances expressives et recherches ornementales dans la peinture byzantine de la seconde moitié du XII^e siècle," *Byzantion*, 35 (1965), 429ff.; O. Demus, *Byzantine Art and the West* (New York, 1970), 173f., 178; T. Velmans, "Les valeurs affectives dans la peinture murale byzantine au XIII^e siècle et la manière de les représenter," *L'art byzantin du XIII^e siècle, Symposium de Sopoćani* (Belgrade, 1967), 47ff. For the tenth century, see K. Weitzmann, "The Origin of the Threnos," *De artibus opuscula XL, Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. M. Meiss (New York, 1961), 476ff., esp. 487.

^{5a} On this class of gestures, see M. Barasch, *Gestures of Despair in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art* (New York, 1976), which reached me too late for a consideration of its conclusions here.

⁶ Book XVIII, lines 22-31.

⁷ Book II.1,2.

his cheek.”⁸ Similar gestures were even recorded in homilies devoted to events of the New Testament. For example, a twelfth-century sermon by the Greek preacher Philagathus, who lived in Southern Italy, portrays the lamentation of the Widow of Nain in two distinct phases. While her stricken son was yet alive, she stood gazing at him, her head uncovered, her hair cut, and her breasts bared, in demonstration of her impending sorrow. But when she saw that her child was dead, she tore her hair and cheeks and struck her chest and head with stones.⁹

These accounts of lamentation in the literature seem to have corresponded to actual practice. The Byzantine princess Anna Comnena, for example, records how mourners in the twelfth century beat themselves and pulled out their hair.¹⁰ In parts of the Balkans elements of such ritual laments have survived even into modern times.¹¹

Violent gestures of mourning were also depicted in works of art. They appeared in the funerary art of ancient Egypt¹² and in early Greek vase paintings from the eighth to the fifth centuries.¹³ The extreme gestures of lamentation passed into Roman art, especially into the stock of attitudes drawn upon by the carvers of mythological sarcophagi. Thus, on the cover of a Meleager sarcophagus in the Palazzo Sciarra, we find Althaea represented once running toward a group carrying the dead body of her son, with her hair loose and one of her breasts bared, and then a second time behind Meleager’s bier, pulling her hair with both hands (fig. 1).¹⁴ As late as the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century, we find these gestures dramatizing a scene from pagan mythology in the miniature of the Death of Dido in the Vatican Virgil (fig. 2). Dido’s handmaidens stand around her pyre, with their hair unbound and their clothes torn from their shoulders. One, on the left, raises her fist as if she were beating her chest.¹⁵

In the ancient world these displays of grief did not pass without criticism. Cicero, for example, abhorred “...those various and detestable types of mourning: [the application of] filth, women lacerating their cheeks, the

⁸ Καὶ γοῦν ὁ πατήρ τὴν στολὴν ἐρρηγμένος
καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὴν κόμην κεκαρμένος
καὶ τὴν κορυφὴν τῇ κόνει πεπασμένος
καὶ τὴν παρεῖαν ἐγκατεσπαράγμένος. . . .

Book I, line 206 ff., ed. R. Hercher, *Erotici scriptores graeci*, II (Leipzig, 1859).

⁹ *Homilia* VI, 8 and 10, ed. G. Rossi Taibbi, *Filagato da Cerami, Omelie per i vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno*, I (Palermo, 1969); PG, 132, cols. 224D–228A. A similar description of the Widow is found in a sermon spuriously attributed to St. John Chrysostom, PG, 61, col. 792.

¹⁰ *Alexiad*, XI.12,2; XV.11,17; XV.11,20.

¹¹ M. Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974), 41; T. P. Vukanović, “Lamentation dans la peinture à fresque chez les Slaves du Sud au Moyen Age,” *Vranjski glasnik*, 8 (1972), 79 ff., esp. 87 f.

¹² H. Müller, “Darstellungen von Gebärden auf Denkmälern des Alten Reiches,” *MDIK*, 7 (1937), 57 ff., esp. 111 f., figs. 49–51.

¹³ G. Neumann, *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin, 1965), 86, fig. 42; H. Kenner, *Weinen und Lachen in der griechischen Kunst, SBÖsterr.*, Phil.-hist.Kl., 234 (Vienna, 1960), 8 ff., fig. 4.

¹⁴ C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, III,2 (Berlin, 1904), 297 f. no. 230, fig. 78; see also the Meleager sarcophagi, nos. 281, fig. 93, and 293, fig. 97.

¹⁵ J. de Wit, *Die Miniaturen des Vergilius Vaticanus* (Amsterdam, 1959), 90, pictura 27.

beating of the breasts, the thighs, and the head.”¹⁶ Christian writers, for whom such behavior showed not only lack of decorum but also lack of faith, also spoke against excessive demonstrations of mourning. St. John Chrysostom was particularly insistent in his condemnation of unrestrained lamentation. In a sermon on the Raising of Lazarus he compared the restraint of Mary and Martha with the abandon of the women of his own time: “But now, along with the other evils, this female affliction also prevails. For in lamenting and wailing they make a display, baring their arms, tearing their hair, making gullies down their cheeks. And they do this, some from grief, others for display, from a desire to emulate, and from prodigality. And they bare their arms—this under the eyes of men.”¹⁷ But it was not only on account of immodesty that these actions were evil. John Chrysostom asks, “Will not the Pagans laugh? Will they not consider our beliefs to be myths? For they will say: ‘There is no resurrection.’”¹⁸ The Church Father, however, does not condemn grief altogether, for he recommends that Christians grieve for their misdeeds: “The Lord says: ‘Blessed are those who mourn,’ meaning those who mourn their sins.”¹⁹ He also recognizes that sorrow is in human nature, which Christ Himself shared: “[Weeping] I do not forbid, but I forbid beating oneself and immoderate weeping. . . . It is impossible not to mourn. Christ too showed this; for he wept over Lazarus. You also do this. Weep, but gently, but with decorum, but with the fear of God. If you were to weep thus, you would not weep as one who distrusts the Resurrection, but as one who cannot bear being separated.”²⁰

The conviction that excessive displays of grief were incompatible with a faith in the Resurrection appears in the works of later Byzantine writers. The eighth-century treatises on images by John of Damascus contrast the attitudes toward death proper to the old order and the new: “In the old [dispensation] . . . the race of men was under a curse, and death was a penalty, and was therefore mourned. . . . But now, since the Godhead has mingled with our nature, as a vivifying and saving remedy, as it were, our nature has become glorified and has been transformed into immortality.”²¹ Elsewhere

¹⁶ *Ex hac opinione sunt illa varia et detestabilia genera lugendi: paedores, muliebres lacerationes genarum, pectoris, feminum, capitis percussiones. Tusculanae disputationes*, III, 62.

¹⁷ Ἀλλὰ νῦν μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων κακῶν καὶ τοῦτο τῶν γυναικῶν τὸ νόσημα κρατεῖ. Ἐπίδειξιν γὰρ ἐν τοῖς θρήνοις ποιοῦνται καὶ τοῖς κωκυτοῖς, γυμνοῦσαι βραχίονας, σπαράττουσαι τρίχας, χαράδρας ποιοῦσαι κατὰ τῶν παρειῶν. Καὶ τοῦτο ποιοῦσιν, αἱ μὲν ὑπὸ πένθους, αἱ δὲ ὑπὸ ἐπιδείξεως καὶ φιλοτιμίας, αἱ δὲ ὑπὸ ἀσωτίας· καὶ τοὺς βραχίονας γυμνοῦσιν, ἐν ὧσιν καὶ ταῦτα ἀνδρῶν. *In Joannem homilia* LXII, PG, 59, col. 346.

¹⁸ ἄρ' οὐ γελᾶσονται Ἕλληνες; ἄρ' οὐ μύθους τὰ ἡμέτερα εἶναι νομίσουσιν; Ἐροῦσι γὰρ· Οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνάστασις. *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Καὶ ὁ μὲν Κύριος φησὶ· Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, τοὺς τὰ ἀμαρτήματα πενθοῦντας λέγων. *Ibid.*, col. 347.

²⁰ Οὐδὲ ἐγὼ τοῦτο κωλύω, ἀλλὰ κωλύω τὸ κόπτεσθαι, τὸ ἀμέτρως τοῦτο ποιεῖν. . . . Οὐκ ἔνεστι μὴ λυπεῖσθαι. Τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἔδειξεν· ἐδάκρυσε γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῦ Λαζάρου. Τοῦτο καὶ σὺ ποίησον· δάκρυσον, ἀλλ' ἡρέμα, ἀλλὰ μετὰ εὐσχημοσύνης, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τοῦ φόβου τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἄν δακρύσης οὕτως, οὐχ ὥς τῇ ἀναστάσει διαπιστῶν τοῦτο ποιεῖς, ἀλλ' ὥς οὐ φέρων τὸν χωρισμόν. *Ibid.* Similar passages condemning excessive lamentation are to be found in sermons by St. Basil of Caesarea (PG, 31, col. 229C) and St. Gregory of Nazianzus (PG, 35, col. 928A–B). See Alexiou, *op. cit.*, 28 ff.

²¹ Καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς Παλαιᾶς. . . . Ἐτι γὰρ ὑπὸ κατάραν ἦν ἡ τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσις, καὶ ὁ θάνατος κατὰκρισις ἦν, διὸ καὶ ἐπενθεῖτο. . . . Νῦν δέ, ἅρ' οὐ ἡ Θεότης τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ φύσει συνανεκράθη, οἷόν τι ζωοποιὸν καὶ σωτήριον φάρμακον, ἐδοξάσθη ἡ φύσις ἡμῶν, καὶ πρὸς ἀφθαρσίαν μετεστοιχειώθη. *De imaginibus oratio* II, PG, 94, col. 1296A.

we read: "Now the remembrances of the saints are kept as festivals. The dead body of Jacob was bewailed, but the death of Stephen is celebrated."²² These passages help us understand the distribution of gestures of grief in Middle Byzantine art. The violent gestures of tearing the hair and clothes and of beating the head and chest, which existed in classical art, also survived to some extent in Christian art, but they appeared in restricted contexts. As we are led to expect by John of Damascus, they occur primarily in Old Testament scenes. In the New Testament we find them repeatedly in only one episode, the Massacre of the Innocents, and here their presence will be explicable in the light of the teaching of the writers we have quoted. Violent gestures were also employed in depictions of penitents, a context in which lamentation was specifically commended by St. John Chrysostom.

In Old Testament illustration we find extreme gestures of mourning both in Early and in Middle Byzantine art. For example, an ivory on the sixth-century chair of Maximian at Ravenna depicts the grief of Jacob when presented with Joseph's blood-stained coat (fig. 3).²³ The Patriarch's robe is torn in front, exposing his chest. This directly illustrates the Biblical text (Gen. 37:34): "Jacob rent his clothes, put on sack cloth, and mourned his son for a long time." Jacob also shows his sorrow in the ivory carving by laying both hands on the crown of his head, a gesture which may either indicate the action of pulling his hair or of sprinkling himself with ashes. An eleventh-century Octateuch manuscript in the Vatican, gr. 747, clearly shows the old man tugging at his hair (fol. 59r). Here the gesture is unambiguous, as Jacob holds a strand in each hand and pulls them down on either side of his face (fig. 4). In the sixth century, the action of tearing the hair also characterized the grief of mourners in death-bed scenes of the Vienna Genesis. In the miniature of the death of Deborah a woman tears at her hair, with one hand on each side of her face (fig. 5); in addition, she has rent her garment at her neck.²⁴ The gesture of pulling the hair recurs in the mourning scenes of the Vatican Octateuch such as the death of Jacob on folio 71v (fig. 6).²⁵

In his description of the Crucifixion, St. Luke (23:48) tells us that "... the crowds that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts. . . ." But in the iconography of the death and burial of Christ in Early and Middle Byzantine art, we rarely, if ever, find mourners beating themselves or tearing at their hair and garments, and this is also the case for the death of the Virgin and for miracles involving the healing of the

²² Νῦν δὲ τῶν ἁγίων ἐορτάζεται τὰ μνημόσυνα. Ἐπεὶ θήθη ὁ νεκρὸς τοῦ Ἰακώβ, ἀλλ' ὁ Στεφάνου πανηγυρίζεται θάνατος. *Ibid.* I, PG, 94, col. 1253A.

²³ J. Natanson, *Early Christian Ivories* (London, 1953) (hereafter Natanson, *Ivories*), 31, fig. 40; W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1976) (hereafter Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*), 93, no. 140.

²⁴ H. Gerstinger, *Die Wiener Genesis* (Vienna, 1931), 96, fol. 13v; see also fols. 14r (death of Isaac) and 24v (death of Jacob).

²⁵ This gesture also occurs in the illustrations of the ninth-century Job manuscripts on Patmos, MS 171, page 43, and in the Vatican, gr. 749, fol. 21r, as well as in the early tenth-century codex in Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, gr. 538, fol. 18r. See G. Jacobi, "Le miniature dei codici di Patmo," *Clara Rhodos*, 6-7, pt. 3 (1932-33), fig. 101; K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1935), figs. 531, 342.

sick and the raising of the dead. In these scenes, sorrow was shown by means of inactive, restrained gestures, as if in accord with the precept of St. John Chrysostom that weeping was permissible, but only in moderation. There are few exceptions to this rule. One is the Raising of the Son of the Widow of Nain, a scene in which Middle Byzantine artists occasionally went so far as to show the women mourning with their hair unbound and falling over their shoulders.²⁶ This indulgence corresponded to a long literary tradition of the Widow's lament in Byzantine sermons, from which an example has been cited above.²⁷ A more important and more general exception to this rule of New Testament iconography was the Massacre of the Innocents. The abandoned gestures of the mothers in this scene were repeatedly described in the literature and also, in a more restricted manner, depicted in works of art. Thus, a sermon on the Massacre attributed spuriously to St. John Chrysostom declares: "Under the impact of these and similar [occurrences] the mothers weakened, and in the intoxication of their suffering they did not heed decorum. They tore apart their tunics, they shook their locks in the air, they publicly exposed their breasts which should have been concealed, they lacerated their chests with stones, they rent their cheeks like executioners."²⁸ This anonymous author goes on to explain that the mothers abandoned themselves to despair because they did not have the consoling knowledge of the death and Resurrection of Christ: "It is probable that the mothers, stung by their suffering, cried thus, as they did not know what would profit their children. Who is more blessed than those who are plotted against on account of the Lord Christ? Who is more blessed than these children, because they were not slain by themselves only, but also as Christ himself was killed?"²⁹ Philagathus portrayed the same gestures in a description of a painting of the Massacre, which he inserted into a sermon on the Holy Innocents. He opens his *ekphrasis* with the following statement: "I saw this [scene of] suffering depicted in colors on a panel, and I was moved to pity and tears."³⁰ Since this opening is a *topos*, which was also used by Gregory of Nyssa to introduce an *ekphrasis* on paintings of the Sacrifice of Isaac, one may wonder whether Philagathus was describing a real or an imagined picture.³¹ His portrayal of the lamenting mothers certainly owes much to the literary tradition: "The painter depicted the

²⁶ See the miniature in the eleventh-century Gospels in Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 74, fol. 121r: H. Omont, *Evangelies avec peintures byzantines du XI^e siècle* (Paris [n.d.]), pl. 107,2.

²⁷ See note 9 *supra*.

²⁸ 'Επὶ τούτοις οὖν καὶ τοῖς παραπλησίοις αἱ μητέρες ἡσθένουν, καὶ τῷ πάθει μεθύουσαι τῆς εὐπρεπείας οὐκ ἐφρόντιζον. Τοὺς χιτῶνας διερρήγνυσον, τοὺς πλοκάμους τῷ ἄρι διέρριπτον, τοὺς ὀφειλομένους κρύπτεσθαι μαστοὺς ἐδημοσίεον, τὸ στήθος λίθοις κατήρασσον, τὰς παρειὰς ὡς δῆμιοι κατέξεον. *In Herodem et infantes*, PG, 61, col. 702. For a more toned-down description, see the sermon by the fifth-century writer Basil of Seleucia, PG, 85, col. 389C.

²⁹ 'Αλλ' εἰκὸς μὲν τὰς μητέρας ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους δακνομένας ταῦτα βοᾶν, μὴ εἰδίας τὸ συμφέρον τοῖς αὐτῶν νεοττοῖς. Τί δὲ μακαριώτερον τῶν διὰ τὸν Δεσπότην Χριστὸν ἐπιβουλευομένων; τί μακαριώτερον τούτων τῶν παίδων, ὅτι οὐ δι' ἑαυτῶν ἐσφάζοντο μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ Χριστὸς ἐφονεύετο; *Ibid.*

³⁰ Εἶδον ἐγὼ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος χρώμασι γεγραμμένον ἐν πίνακι, καὶ πρὸς οἶκτον ἐκινήθην καὶ δάκρυα. *Homilia XXIV.9*, ed. Rossi Taibbi (note 9 *supra*); PG, 132, col. 924A–B.

³¹ Gregory's *ekphrasis* is in *De deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti*, PG, 46, col. 572C; cf. also Ephraem Syrus, *Sermo in Abraham et Isaac*, ed. S. I. Mercati, *S. Ephraem Syri opera*, I (Rome, 1915), 75. See R. Stichel's review of C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453*, in *BZ*, 68 (1975), 129f.

unhappy mothers given to a piteous lament and mixing tears with blood. And one tore her hair, another scraped her cheeks with her nails, another tore apart her robe, and baring her chest, showed her breast, deprived of the feeding baby."³² Of these actions, the only gesture which Byzantine artists chose to illustrate was the tearing of the hair. A pyx in the Louvre, which probably dates to the sixth century, depicts one of the mothers with her hair loosed and her hands clasped to the crown of her head (fig. 7).³³ A fresco of the tenth century in the Old Church at Tokalı Kilise depicts the action of pulling the hair more distinctly, for here one of the women tugs down on a strand of hair with each hand.³⁴ The action is repeated by one of the mothers in a miniature of the Massacre in the eleventh-century Gospel Book in Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 74, folio 5^r (fig. 8).³⁵ In none of these portrayals of the scene, however, do we find the mothers scratching their cheeks or tearing open their garments, in the manner described by Philagathus.

According to St. John Chrysostom, lamentation was permissible if it was over one's own sins, and it is in portrayals of penitents that we find the most violent gestures of grief in Middle Byzantine art. In the ninth-century Gregory manuscript in Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 510, folio 3^r, the painter of the Jonah story showed the repentant King of Nineveh tearing his robe from his chest, while behind him a weeping official lifts his mantle to his face (fig. 9).³⁶ We can find further examples of such gestures in illustrations of the *Heavenly Ladder* which depict the visit of the author, John Climacus, to the prison of the penitent monks. In an eleventh-century manuscript in the Vatican, gr. 394, the text, "[I saw] others continually beating their breasts and restoring their life and soul," corresponds to a miniature which shows five monks raising their clenched fists to strike themselves (fol. 42^v).³⁷ The violent grief of sinners is dramatized further in miniatures of the *Penitential Canon*. This curious poem, ascribed to Andrew of Crete, was composed to celebrate the "Holy Criminals," whose prison is described in the *Heavenly Ladder*. The finest surviving copy of the *Penitential Canon* is a manuscript in the Vatican, gr. 1754, which dates to the twelfth or early thirteenth century. In this manuscript, each verse of the canon appears on a separate page, together with a miniature and a descriptive legend. The pictures and the legends detail the various trials undergone by the penitent monks. It is a catalogue of self-inflicted pain and suffering. One of the pictures in the manuscript, folio 6^r (fig. 10), shows

³² "Ἐγραψεν ὁ ζωγράφος καὶ τὰς ἀθλίας μητέρας οἰκτρὸν συνιστώσας θρήνον καὶ τοῖς αἵμασι κιννώσας τὰ δοκρυα. Καὶ ἡ μὲν ἐτίλλε τὰς κόμας, ἡ δὲ τοῖς ὄνυξι τὰς παρειὰς περιέδρυφεν· ἄλλη διέρρησε τὸν πέπλον, καὶ τὰ στήρνα παραγυμνοῦσα τὸν μαστὸν ὑπεδείκνυ καταλειφθέντα τοῦ θηλάζοντος ἔρμημον· *Loc. cit.*

³³ G. Bovini and L. B. Ottolenghi, *Catalogo della mostra degli avori* (Ravenna, 1956), no. 38, fig. 59.

³⁴ M. Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* (Shannon, 1969), I, 111 ff.; II, fig. 85.

³⁵ Omont, *Evangelies*, pl. 7, 2. The same gesture occurs in a miniature of a lectionary in the Vatican, gr. 1156, fol. 280^v (photograph in the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University).

³⁶ *Idem*, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1929), 13, fig. 20.

³⁷ [ἑώρακα] ἑτέρους τὸ στήθος διαπαντὸς τύπτοντας, καὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ψυχὴν καὶ ζωὴν ἀνακαλουμένους. PG, 88, col. 765B; J. R. Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton, 1954) (hereafter Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*), 61, fig. 85.

the monks tearing at their hair, under a caption which reads in part: "These, being at a loss for tears, strike themselves."³⁸

The active gestures of grief which I have discussed in this section appeared rarely in Middle Byzantine art, and only in specific contexts. They did not occur in scenes such as the Crucifixion and Burial of Christ, the *Koimesis*, and the Raising of Lazarus, in which a too emphatic display of grief would be contrary to the message of hope brought by the Resurrection. In Old Testament illustration, however, and in scenes of penitence they were permissible.

The artistic tradition was more conservative than the literary tradition with regard to the deployment of gestures of lamentation. Actions which were acceptable in description may have been offensive when actually depicted. Thus, we read in Byzantine texts of mourners scratching their cheeks or of women exposing their breasts even in New Testament contexts, such as the Raising of the Widow's son. But in Middle Byzantine art we rarely find extremes of this kind in any context, let alone in the New Testament. If we go beyond the Middle Byzantine period, however, into the thirteenth century, we find artists beginning to abandon the restraint practiced by their predecessors. We find in New Testament contexts not only such gestures as the pulling of hair, but also extremes of the kind which had earlier only featured in the homilies, such as the scratching of cheeks. In the famous *Koimesis* fresco at Sopoćani one mourner pulls her hair while another draws her fingers down each side of her face, as if to scar her cheeks (fig. 11, center).³⁹ In the fresco of the *Threnos* in the Peribleptos Church at Ohrid the mourners tear at their hair, and even the Virgin has allowed hers to fall unbound over her shoulders.⁴⁰ Literary license, then, finally affected works of art. We shall find this pattern repeated in the case of other gestures.

2. *The Hand Raised to the Head: Sitting Figures*

In Byzantine art there were several gestures which expressed an inner, brooding sorrow, as opposed to the violent demonstrations discussed on the previous pages. For sitting figures, the most common of these passive poses was that of propping the head up on one hand while resting the elbow on one knee. In both classical and Byzantine art, this gesture could convey pensiveness or concentration with no specific overtones of sorrow, as in the case of portraits of authors. On an ivory of the fifth century in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris, a poet sits listening to his muse playing the lyre, with his chin resting in his left hand and his left elbow on his right hand, which lies

³⁸ Οὔτοι δακρύων ἀποροῦντες, ἑαυτοὺς κατακόπτουσιν' *Ibid.*, 133, fig. 253.

³⁹ R. Hamann-Mac Lean and H. Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien* (Giessen, 1963), 25f., fig. 128.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 28f., fig. 168. See also the miniature of the Lamentation in a Gospel Book on Mount Athos, Vatopedi 735, fol. 16r, in which the Virgin pulls her hair: G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Evangile* (Paris, 1916) (hereafter Millet, *Recherches*), 507, fig. 548. Further examples of violent gestures in thirteenth-century paintings of the Lamentation have been given by A. K. Orlandos, 'Η ἀρχιτεκτονική καὶ αἱ βυζαντινὰ τοιχογραφία τῆς Μονῆς τοῦ Θεολόγου Πάτμου (Athens, 1970), 237ff., fig. 94.

on his thigh (fig. 12).⁴¹ This type of seated author portrait survived in Middle Byzantine art in the form of depictions of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and John, who were often illustrated with their chins propped on their hands.⁴²

In its meaning, therefore, of thought and deliberation, this pose survived from classical into Byzantine art. Often the gesture denoted a meditation on the past which was painful or a regret for former deeds—a significance found in antique art. A red-figured vase in the Metropolitan Museum in New York depicts Tydeus propping his head up on his arm, as an indication not only of the exhaustion and injury of battle but also of regret for his crime against his opponent, Melanippus, which cost him his immortality.⁴³ Christian artists depicted Adam and Eve in the same pose as they lamented their Fall and Expulsion from Paradise: the ninth-century Gregory manuscript in Paris, folio 52^v, shows Adam seated with his head supported on one hand and his elbow resting on his thigh (fig. 13).⁴⁴ Adam also appears in a similar pose on two Byzantine ivory caskets of the eleventh or twelfth centuries in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (fig. 14).⁴⁵

In New Testament illustration, the gesture served to convey the remorse of St. Peter, when at the third crow of the cock he was reminded of his denial of Christ. On a fifth-century ivory plaque in the Louvre, Peter sits resting his head on the palm of his hand as the cock crows from a city wall, in illustration of the verse from St. Matthew which records that when the Apostle heard the sound, "He went out and wept bitterly" (26:75).⁴⁶ In a miniature of the eleventh-century Gospel Book in Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 74, folio 159^r, the artist showed Peter weeping in the same pose.⁴⁷

We can find further examples in Byzantine art of the gesture with the meaning of remorse or repentance in illustrations of the *Heavenly Ladder* and of the *Penitential Canon*. A miniature of the *Penitential Canon* in the Vatican, gr. 1754, folio 7^v, depicts a group of monks sitting with their heads propped up on their arms (fig. 15). The legend describes their pensive grief: "These, sitting deep in thought on the ground and moving their heads without ceasing, roar from inside their hearts."⁴⁸

There are numerous instances in both classical and Byzantine art in which the pose characterized the brooding sorrow of bereavement. On Attic grave reliefs, both the mourners and the deceased were shown sitting with their

⁴¹ Natanson, *Ivories*, 26f., fig. 14; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 59, no. 71.

⁴² See A. M. Friend, Jr., "The Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts," *Art Studies*, 5 (1927), 115ff., esp. 134ff.

⁴³ Neumann, *Gesten* (note 13 *supra*), 151f., fig. 77.

⁴⁴ Omont, *Miniatures*, 16, fig. 24.

⁴⁵ A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen* (hereafter Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*), I (Berlin, 1930), no. 82b, pl. 52, no. 90, pl. 55.

⁴⁶ Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 86, no. 121.

⁴⁷ Omont, *Evangelies* (note 26 *supra*), pl. 137.

⁴⁸ Οὔτοι σύννουσ ἐπ' ἐδάφους καθήμενοι· καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν διηνεκῶς κεφαλὰς κινοῦντες, ἐκ μέσης καρδίας βρόχουσιν. Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, 134, fig. 256. See also Vat. gr. 394, fols. 42^v, 43^r: *ibid.*, 60f., fig. 85f.

heads resting on their hands.⁴⁹ We also find the pose in mythological scenes, such as the carving of two figures in mourning beside the tomb of Meleager on the end of a sarcophagus in Ostia (fig. 16).⁵⁰ In Early Christian and Byzantine art we can find direct counterparts to the many classical portrayals of women weeping beside a tomb. On an early fifth-century ivory plaque in the British Museum, the two Maries sit beside the sepulcher of Christ in positions similar to those of the mourners of Meleager, the woman on the right resting her chin on her hand (fig. 17).⁵¹ Here, the two mourners illustrate Matt. 27:61, which relates that, after the entombment, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulcher." The tomb itself, however, with its doors standing open and its guards sleeping, refers to the first verses of Matt. 28, which describe the opening of the tomb by an angel. A ninth-century miniature in the Chludov Psalter in Moscow, Historical Museum, add. gr. 129, folio 44r, shows us the two Maries again sitting beside the tomb and touching their cheeks with their fingers.⁵² The vigil of the Maries beside the sepulcher was also illustrated in a miniature of a tenth-century lectionary in Leningrad, Public Library, MS 21, folio 8v (fig. 18).⁵³ Finally, a thirteenth-century illumination in a Gospel Book in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, gr. qu. 66, folio 96r, shows one of the two women in the conventional pose of sorrow as she grieves beside an open sarcophagus containing the body of Christ (fig. 19).⁵⁴

A graphic description of a mosaic of the Holy Women weeping beside the sepulcher graces the *ekphrasis* on the church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, which was written by Mesarites between 1198 and 1203. The orator reports that the Maries are "...shown seated over against the tomb... overcome as they are by the disaster and robbed of all their intelligence by the catastrophe, and gazing in complete absorption only at the tomb itself, unable to be drawn from it."⁵⁵ This description accords well with the brooding, still posture of grief which we have found in the Early Christian ivory and in Byzantine paintings of the scene. One may compare the description particularly with the miniature in the Leningrad Lectionary, in which both women sit gazing at the monument in front of them. However, Mesarites also says that the women give more active expression to their grief, and that they "...scar their cheeks with scratches."⁵⁶ There is no evidence of this violent gesture

⁴⁹ Neumann, *Gesten*, 130, fig. 67; C. W. Clairmont, *Gravestone and Epigram* (Mainz, 1970), no. 51, pl. 24.

⁵⁰ S. Reinach, *Répertoire de reliefs grecs et romains*, III (Paris, 1912), 97, no. 1.

⁵¹ Natanson, *Ivories*, 26, fig. 13; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 82, no. 116.

⁵² Photograph in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. See also cod. Pantocrator. 61, fol. 112r: Millet, *Recherches*, 462f., fig. 484.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 462f., fig. 485.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 465, fig. 487.

⁵⁵ "... αἱ κατέναντι τοῦ κατὰ διάμετρον ἡμῖν τάφου καθήμεναι καταφαίνονται... νενικημένοι τῇ συμφορᾷ καὶ ὅλον τὸν νοῦν ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους σεσυλημένοι καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν μόνον τὸν τάφον ὁλοσχερῶς ἀποβλέπουσαι τε καὶ ἀναπόσπαστα. Ed. G. Downey, "Nikolaos Mesarites: Description of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," *TAPS*, N.S. 47,6 (1957), XXVIII, 3 and 6. I am indebted to Professor Downey for permission to quote from his translation. On the dating of the mosaics described by Mesarites, see Maguire, "Truth and Convention" (note 2 *supra*), 122ff.

⁵⁶ "... τὰς παρειὰς ταῖς ἀμυχαῖς... καταξάνουσι. Ed. Downey, XXVIII, 5.

in the illustrations of this scene in art; it is an elaboration which, as we have seen, may probably be ascribed to literary convention. Here, then, the literary description incorporates both an understanding of a gesture inherited from classical art and inaccuracy inspired by literary tradition.

The gesture of sitting with the head propped on one hand conveyed not only suffering arising from deliberation but also pain linked with physical tiredness. The famous statue of Hercules by Lysippus provides an example from Antiquity of the pose signifying both exhaustion and suffering. It was made for the town of Tarentum in the fourth century B.C. In 209 B.C. it was taken by Fabius Maximus to Rome, and in A.D. 325 Constantine the Great transferred the statue to Constantinople, where it remained until it was destroyed by the Crusaders. There are three surviving descriptions of the Hercules. The most complete is that written by Nicetas Choniates in his lament on the statues of Constantinople which had been destroyed by the Crusaders. Nicetas records that Hercules was seated on a basket, on which was spread out his lion's skin: "He bent his left leg at the knee, and propped his left arm on his elbow, holding his forearm upright. On the palm of his left hand, full of despondency, he gently leant his head, and thus lamented his ill fortune, and was vexed at his labors."⁵⁷ The particular labor to which this statue referred was evidently the cleaning of the Augean stables; the basket on which Hercules sat had been used to remove the refuse. Another, less detailed description of the statue is given by the twelfth-century writer Constantine Manasses, who, like Nicetas Choniates, says that the head of Hercules "sinks down from depression," and that he is "lamenting his ill fortune."⁵⁸ In the *Greek Anthology* there is a Hellenistic epigram on the same statue. The author, Geminus, foreshadows the Byzantine writers, seeing in the Hercules the expression of sorrow: "Why did Lysippus make you so downcast, mixing in pain with the bronze?"⁵⁹

It is very likely that the Hercules of Lysippus is reproduced on a tenth-century Byzantine ivory casket which is now in Xanten (fig. 20).⁶⁰ The ivory has many points in common with the descriptions: Hercules is seated on a basket spread with a lion's skin, his left leg is bent, he props his left forearm on his elbow, and his head lies on his left hand. However, it is unlikely that the carver copied the statue directly. According to the description by Nicetas Choniates, Hercules was "...extending his right foot and right hand as far

⁵⁷ τὸν δὲ εὐώνυμον πόδα κάμπτων εἰς τὸ γόνυ, καὶ τὴν λαιὰν χεῖρα ἐπ' ἀγκῶνος ἐρείδων· εἶτα τὸ λοιπὸν τῆς χειρὸς ἀνατείνων, καὶ τῷ πλατεῖ ταύτης, ἀθυμίας πλήρης, καθυποκλίνων ἡρέμα τὴν κεφαλὴν, καὶ τὰς ἰδίας οὕτω τύχας ἀποκλαιόμενος καὶ δυσχεραίνων τοῖς ἄσλοισι. *Narratio de statuīs*, PG, 139, col. 1048B.

⁵⁸ ...τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑπανέχων ὑπὸ βαρυθυμίας ὀκλάζουσιν· εἴποι τις αὐτὸν τὰς ἑαυτοῦ τύχας ὀδύρεσθαι· L. Sternbach, "Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte," *ÖJh*, 5 (1902), Beiblatt, col. 75, line 29f.

⁵⁹ τί σ' ἐπλασεν ὧδε κατηφῇ

Λύσιππος, χαλκῷ τ' ἐγκατέμιξ' ὀδύνην;

Anthologia Palatina, XVI, no. 103.

⁶⁰ M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age* (New York, 1961), 36; K. Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, 1951), 161; C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *DOP*, 17 (1963), 73.

as he could. . . ,”⁶¹ but in the ivory his right arm is bent. In addition, in the ivory Hercules is beardless, whereas the original in all probability portrayed him with a beard.⁶² It is more likely that the carver copied his hero through the intermediary of a small-scale model. We know that reproductions of classical sculptures survived in manuscripts of the Middle Byzantine period,⁶³ while the influence of manuscript painting on tenth-century ivory carvings is well attested, both in the case of Christian and of pagan scenes.⁶⁴

The attitude of the Hercules of Lysippus expresses a suffering endurance of virtuous labors, but sometimes in Byzantine art it can show a lassitude and depression that is vicious. In a miniature of an eleventh-century manuscript of the *Heavenly Ladder* in Princeton, Garrett 16, folio 87^r, a monk sitting with his cheek resting on his left hand and with his left elbow supported on his thigh illustrates a text on torpor or depression (ἀκηδία).⁶⁵ Another miniature in the same manuscript (fol. 112^r) depicts three monks in a similar attitude in order to illustrate a chapter discussing the tendency of monks to sleep during prayer and psalm singing (fig. 21).⁶⁶ In the background of their cave we can dimly see the lectern which they have slothfully abandoned.

The gesture of sitting with the head resting on one hand also appears in biblical contexts which combine sleep and sorrow. In the Agony in the Garden we can trace its occurrence from the fourth century to the twelfth. The sculptor of a fourth-century sarcophagus from Servanne portrayed Christ in the garden flanked by two standing apostles, and two sitting apostles resting their cheeks on their hands with their elbows on their knees.⁶⁷ The sculpture aptly illustrates the verse in St. Luke (22:45) which records that after Christ had prayed he found the disciples “sleeping for sorrow.” The pose reappears in an early sixth-century mosaic at Sant’Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna.⁶⁸ Here, all the apostles have their eyes open, but several Middle Byzantine versions of the scene make a distinction between St. Peter, who is awake and to whom Christ addresses His rebuke (Matt. 26:40; Mark 14:37), and the other apostles, who are asleep with their eyes shut. An example is the miniature in an eleventh-century lectionary in the Dionysiu monastery on Mount Athos, MS 587, folio 66^r (fig. 22),⁶⁹ where St. Peter sits listening to Christ’s words

⁶¹ . . . ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν δεξιὰν βάσιν ἐκτείνων ὥσπερ καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν χεῖρα, εἰς ὅσον ἐξῆν. . . . PG, 139, col. 1048A.

⁶² Bieber, *op. cit.*, 35f.

⁶³ For example, a miniature in an eleventh-century manuscript of Cosmas Indicopleustes in Florence, Bibl. Laur., Plut. IX. 28, fol. 272^r, illustrates a Hellenistic sculpture group of a horse devoured by a lion; D. V. Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1961), 25f., figs. 9, 10.

⁶⁴ Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology*, 12f., 154, figs. 2, 167; and *idem*, *The Joshua Roll* (Princeton, 1948), 35.

⁶⁵ Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, 31, fig. 43.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 34, fig. 49.

⁶⁷ J. Wilpert, *I sarcofagi cristiani antichi*, I (Rome, 1929), pl. 15.

⁶⁸ F. W. Deichmann, *Frühchristliche Bauten und Mosaiken von Ravenna* (Baden-Baden, 1958), fig. 184.

⁶⁹ K. Weitzmann, “The Narrative and Liturgical Gospel Illustrations,” *New Testament Manuscript Studies*, ed. M. M. Parvis and A. P. Wikgren (Chicago, 1950), 159f., fig. 17; reprinted in *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, ed. H. L. Kessler (Chicago, 1971), 255, fig. 242. For other examples, see G. and M. Soteriou, *Εκδόσεις τῆς Μονῆς Σινῶ* (Athens, 1956), I, pl. 67; and O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London, 1949), fig. 69B (Monreale).

with his chin propped on one hand and his elbow resting on his thigh, while the other apostles sleep behind him.

The gesture also occurs in an Old Testament scene which is thematically related to Christ's Agony in the New Testament. On folio 359^r of the twelfth-century Octateuch in the Seraglio Library there is an illustration of Moses setting up the bronze serpent, which in some respects seems to echo Byzantine scenes of the Agony in the Garden (fig. 23).⁷⁰ On the right, Moses raises the serpent as a standard, so that it forms the straight transverse bar of a cross; at the lower left a group of Israelites suffer from the snake bites which they have received. One, at the far left, sits resting his chin on his hand, while others recline, propping themselves up on their elbows and supporting their heads on their hands. We can find parallels for these figures among the apostles in portrayals of the Agony. The Israelite sitting at the left in the Octateuch resembles the apostle at the left of the group depicted in the Dionysiu Lectionary (fig. 22), and an apostle lying in the foreground of the New Testament miniature echoes the reclining Israelites in the Old Testament scene.

These visual parallels may have been intentional, for the bronze serpent which Moses set up to cure the Israelites' snake wounds was, of course, a type of the cross, as is stated in John 3:14: "This son of Man must be lifted up as the serpent was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, so that everyone who has faith in him may in him possess eternal life." A twelfth-century poem on the Brazen Serpent by Theodorus Prodromus visualizes the appearance of the standard as a cross in the same manner as the illuminator of the Octateuch: "The bronze serpent was stretched crosswise on the erect wood, opposed to evil living serpents."⁷¹ It is, therefore, not unlikely that the formal parallels between the dying Israelites and the apostles who slept before the Crucifixion were intended to be a visual reminder of the typological link between the two scenes.

The pose of the Lysippan Hercules often served to convey the suffering of Job. The earliest recorded example occurred in a fresco adorning a catacomb chamber near the tomb of the Scipiones in Rome. A restoration drawing by J. Wilpert was published in 1886, showing the prophet sitting on a mound, the fingers of his right hand touching his forehead.⁷² Of the many Middle Byzantine examples, the most striking is a full-page miniature in the tenth-century Leo Bible in the Vatican, Reg. gr. 1, folio 461^v (fig. 24), which shows an emaciated Job sitting on the dung heap with his right leg bent, his right elbow resting on his raised knee, and his chin resting on his right hand. An uncial inscription in the border explains the significance of his attitude: "The painter has shown to us Job naked, covered with boils, his

⁷⁰ T. Ouspensky, *L'Octateuque de la Bibliothèque du Sérail à Constantinople* (Sofia, 1907), fig. 173.

⁷¹ Λέχριος ἐντετάναστο ὄφις ξύλω ὀρθά βεβῶτι
χάλκεος, ἀντίτυπος ἰωῶν ὀφίων κακοεργῶν.

PG, 133, col. 1130B. Mesarites, in his description of the mosaics in the Holy Apostles, also relates the Bronze Serpent to the Crucifixion: ed. Downey (note 55 *supra*), XVII, 1.

⁷² *BACr*, Ser. 4,4 (1886), pl. II.

flesh wasting away; for he had no pity for his many groans, but he created the man's sufferings even in the picture."⁷³

Another context in which we find the gesture of sitting with the head supported on one hand is in the depiction of captives, whom both classical and Byzantine artists portrayed in the same attitude of sorrow. There is a striking parallel between *Judaea capta* on coins of Vespasian and Titus (fig. 25)⁷⁴ and the Hebrews weeping under a tree by the Waters of Babylon in Byzantine psalters of the monastic recension (Ps. 137:1). The classical formula was reproduced in the miniatures of the ninth-century Chludov Psalter, folio 135^r (fig. 26),⁷⁵ and of the eleventh-century Bristol Psalter in the British Museum, add. 40731, folio 223^r.⁷⁶

In the course of this inquiry, we have found that the same pose could signify sleep, meditation, and sorrow. In the examples which I have discussed the meaning has been clear from the contexts, but in one important scene its significance is not immediately obvious. In many Byzantine portrayals of the Nativity, Joseph sits resting his head on his hand; we do not begin to find him in this pose until the fifth or sixth century, but in subsequent centuries it became the general rule.⁷⁷ In the Nativity miniature of the Menologium of Basil II in the Vatican, gr. 1613, page 271, which probably dates to the early eleventh century, the figure of Joseph forms a mirror image of the Lysippan Hercules on the Xanten ivory (figs. 27, 20).⁷⁸ Modern scholars usually interpret Joseph's gesture as either simple meditation or an expression of sorrow.⁷⁹ Byzantine observers, however, consistently saw suffering in Joseph's pose. This can be demonstrated in the case of a Nativity fresco at Kokar Kilise in Southern Cappadocia, in which the old man sits holding his left hand up to his face. An inscription describes him as "Joseph grieving."⁸⁰ The eleventh-century writer John Mauropous, in an *ekphrasis* on a painting of the Nativity, seems to have found the attitude of Joseph at variance with the expected

⁷³ ΓΥΜΝΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΙΩΒ ΣΑΡΚΑΣ ΕΚΤΕΤΗΚΟΤΑΣ
ΕΔΕΙΞΕΝ ΗΜΙΝ Ο ΓΡΑΦΕΥΣ ΕΛΚΟΥΣ ΠΛΕΩΝ
ΟΙΚΤΟΝ ΓΑΡ ΕΙΧΕΝ ΟΥΔΑΜΩΣ ΠΟΛΥΣΤΟΝΟΥ
ΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΠΟΝΟΥΣ Δ' ΥΦΗΝΕ ΚΑΝ ΤΑΙΣ ΕΙΚΟΣΙ

Collezione Paleografica Vaticana, I (Milan, 1905), 13f., fig. 17. Job was painted in the same pose in the manuscripts of Patmos, Monastery of St. John, MS 171 (page 42) and of the Vatican, gr. 749 (fol. 20^v); Weitzmann, *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei* (note 25 *supra*), 50f., 77f., figs. 333, 529. A related image is the "Poor Man" of Psalm 102, as depicted in Pantocrator. 61, fol. 141^v, and in the eleventh-century "Bristol Psalter" in the British Museum, add. 40731 (fol. 165^v): S. Dufrenne, *L'Illustration des psautiers grecs du Moyen Age*, I (Paris, 1966), 33, 63, figs. 21, 57.

⁷⁴ M. Grant, *Roman History from Coins* (Cambridge, 1958), 50, pl. 15,2.

⁷⁵ Photograph in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.

⁷⁶ Dufrenne, *op. cit.*, 65, fig. 59.

⁷⁷ Among the earlier examples are the ivory in Werden Abbey Church (H. Schnitzler, *Rheinische Schatzkammer* [Düsseldorf, 1959]) pl. 162f.), the Sancta Sanctorum reliquary in the Vatican (K. Weitzmann, "Loca Sancta and the Representational Arts of Palestine," *DOP*, 28 [1974], fig. 6), and phial no. 2 at Monza (*ibid.*, fig. 5).

⁷⁸ *Il Menologio di Basilio II*, Codices e Vaticanis selecti, VIII (Turin, 1907), 73f., fig. 271. On the date, see I. Ševčenko, "On Pantoleon the Painter," *JÖBG*, 21 (1972), 241ff.

⁷⁹ For brief discussions of the problem, see Wessel, "Gesten" (note 4 *supra*), 780; G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, trans. J. Seligman, I (Greenwich, 1971), 62.

⁸⁰ (Ιω)σήφ λυπη(ού)μενος. N. and M. Thierry, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris, 1963), 119, fig. 27.

gladness of the Birth of Christ. He speaks first of the joy evoked by the scene, but then turns to "...this old man with downcast eyes, for some other hidden emotion stings him. But having slept a little he will have a release from this, and he will gladly join us all in applauding."⁸¹ Further confirmation of the meaning of Joseph resting his head on his hand is provided by one portrayal of the Nativity in which he does *not* make this gesture, the mosaic at Hosios Lukas (fig. 28),⁸² where he sits holding his left wrist in his right hand. As I shall demonstrate below, in Byzantine art this pose was a sign of grief.

There is ample evidence, then, that in Middle Byzantine art Joseph's attitude at the Nativity should be seen as one of sorrow. The causes of his suffering lay both in the past and in the future. The pose referred back to the first and most obvious reason for Joseph's unhappiness, his initial perplexity concerning the miraculous conception of Christ. His painful deliberations on this subject were explicitly stated in the liturgy.⁸³ But Joseph's pose at the Nativity also refers forward to the forthcoming death of Christ:⁸⁴ Joseph sits at the crib of Jesus in the same attitude in which the Maries will sit at his tomb (figs. 27, 19). Several Byzantine texts specifically connect the Nativity with the death of Christ. In an ecclesiastical history which is sometimes attributed to Germanus, the eighth-century patriarch of Constantinople, we read: "The altar is, and is called, the crib and tomb of the Lord."⁸⁵ Again, in the Byzantine drama *Christos paschon*, the Virgin links the birth and death of Christ when she laments over her son's body: "You lie wound in these robes, who were formerly swathed in swaddling-clothes."⁸⁶ These texts appear to be illustrated in the early thirteenth-century miniature of the Maries sitting by the Sepulcher in the Gospel Book in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, gr. qu. 66, for here the corpse lies exposed to view in an open sarcophagus (fig. 19) and the body is tightly bound like that of the infant in Byzantine Nativity scenes. The rectangular stone sarcophagus, with its arched decorations on the front, even echoes the form of Christ's crib in such Nativity scenes as the late eleventh- or early

⁸¹ ἔὰ δὲ τόνδε τὸν κατηφῆ πρεσβύτερον
δάκνει γὰρ αὐτὸν ἄλλο τι κρυπτὸν πάθος.
ἔξει δὲ τοῦτου μικρὸν ὑπνώσας λύσιν,
καὶ συγκροτήσει πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ἡδέως.

Ed. J. Bollig and P. De Lagarde, *Iohannis Euchaitorum Metropolitae quae in Cod. Vat. gr. 676 supersunt* (Göttingen, 1882), no. 2, line 30ff.

⁸² E. Diez and O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaics in Greece* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 53, fig. 3.

⁸³ An example is the Akathistos hymn, in PG, 92, col. 1340A; P. Testini, "Alle origini dell'iconografia di Giuseppe di Nazareth," *RACr*, 48 (1972), 332. Further citations from the liturgy can be found in K. Onasch, *Das Weihnachtsfest im orthodoxen Kirchenjahr, Liturgie und Ikonographie* (Berlin, 1958), 197f., 226, 238. The eleventh-century cycle of ivory carvings on the Salerno Antependium devotes a separate scene to Joseph's doubts before his reassurance by the angel (Matt. 1:18-20). He sits in front of Mary, gazing at her with his head propped up on his right hand: A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der romanischen Zeit*, IV (Berlin, 1926), no. 126, 26, pl. 45.

⁸⁴ See R. Stichel, *Studien zum Verhältnis von Text und Bild spät- und nachbyzantinischer Vergänglichkeitsdarstellungen* (Vienna, 1971), 65ff.

⁸⁵ Θυσιαστήριόν ἐστι καὶ λέγεται ἡ φάτνη καὶ ὁ τάφος τοῦ Κυρίου. *Historia ecclesiastica et mystica contemplatio*, PG, 98, col. 389.

⁸⁶ Κεῖσθαι γὰρ ὑφάσμασι τοῖς δ' ἐλιγμένους,
ἐν σπαργάνοις πρὶν ἐνεσπαργανωμένους.

Christus patiens, 1464-65, PG, 38, col. 253. See also the text by Symeon Metaphrastes, *infra*, note 221.

twelfth-century miniature in the "Phocas" Lectionary in the Skevophylakion of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos, folio 144^v (fig. 29).⁸⁷ The Nativity, then, may be another instance in which Byzantine artists referred to thematic links between two scenes by repeating a gesture.

The many examples of the pose of the Lysippan Hercules in contexts of grief and suffering in Byzantine art demonstrate that its association with suffering was as strong in the Middle Ages as it had been in the classical period. In addition, the companion meanings of pensiveness and lassitude were also carried over into Byzantine art. It is clear, too, that the pose found its way at a very early stage into Christian iconography, and that it survived as a result of a process of continuous artistic transmission. Its history in scenes such as the Agony in the Garden can be traced without interruption from the fourth century to the twelfth. However, the study of ivory carvings shows that on some occasions medieval Byzantine artists readapted the pose to Christian use directly from a pagan model; for it is evident that the carvers of the two ivories of Adam weeping after the Fall, now in Baltimore, copied their figures directly from a reproduction of the Hercules by Lysippus, such as the portrayal of this statue on the ivory casket now in Xanten which has been discussed above (figs. 14, 20). In the first place, on the ivories the poses of Adam and Hercules correspond in detail: both rest their cheeks on their left palms and their left elbows on their left legs, which are bent, while their right legs are straightened out.⁸⁸ In the second place, Adam sits on a circular object with a criss-cross pattern resembling the basket, which had removed the refuse from the Augean stables, on which the Hercules of the Xanten casket rests. On other Byzantine caskets which show Adam and Eve seated after the Fall the couple sit on objects which can be recognized as stones or tree trunks.⁸⁹ Here, therefore, is an example not only of the survival of this classical pose in Middle Byzantine art but also of its revival. The artists of the Baltimore ivories repeated the general outlines of the gesture made by Adam in accordance with an earlier iconographic tradition of which we are aware through the ninth-century Gregory manuscript in Paris (fig. 13). But for the execution of specific details, such as the basket, they looked to a classical model for guidance.

When, therefore, a twelfth- and a thirteenth-century writer described the Hercules of Lysippus as a figure of lamenting and despondency, they were not only following literary tradition but were also expressing the genuine reaction of Byzantine viewers to a visual convention which was still current in the art of their own time.

3. *The Hand Raised to the Head: Standing Figures*

The seated pose which was the subject of the preceding pages had its counterpart in standing figures. With upright figures there were more variant

⁸⁷ Weitzmann, "Gospel Illustrations" (note 69 *supra*), 171, fig. 30; *idem*, in *Studies*, ed. Kessler (note 69 *supra*), 268, fig. 258.

⁸⁸ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, I, 52.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, nos. 67 (pl. 48), 69 (pl. 50), 75, 78, and 79 (pl. 51).

forms of the gesture according to the precise position of the hand against the face; some of these variants had distinct shades of meaning, but others cannot be distinguished from each other in their significance since Byzantine artists seem to have used them interchangeably in the same contexts. The more important variations on the basic gesture of raising the hand to the head can be seen in the famous tenth-century ivory of the Dormition of the Virgin in the Staatsbibliothek of Munich (fig. 32).⁹⁰ On this ivory two of the apostles grasp their chins between the thumbs and fingers of their right hands, while a mourner in the right background rests his chin on the back of his hand. Another apostle, on the right, presses his robe against his cheek with one hand, while in the far background on the left a woman raises her mantle with both hands to cover the lower part of her face. We may also observe that three of the mourners in the ivory make more exaggerated gestures of grief. On the right an apostle clasps his hands over one side of his face, while on the left another shields his eyes, at the same time turning his head away from the main action of the scene, thus giving still greater emphasis to his sorrow. Finally, we may note that one mourner at the far right has clapped his hand over his mouth, as if to stifle his cries. I shall reserve my discussion of this especially emphatic gesture until the end of this section.

These different forms of the gesture of raising the hand to the head were described, and their significance explained, in classical and Byzantine literature. For example, an Early Christian writer, Cyprian, refers to a youth as "...anxious and rather sad, with a certain indignation, holding his chin in his hand. . . ."⁹¹ Both antique and medieval authors described weepers lifting their garments to their faces in order to catch their tears. So in Homer, Telemachus wept for the absent Odysseus: "He shed tears onto the ground from his eyelids, when he heard tell of his father, holding up his purple mantle with both hands against his eyes."⁹² And in the Byzantine romance of Digenes Akrites, a girl abandoned by her lover "...wiped with her linen the rains from her eyes."⁹³ Classical and Byzantine writers also described the emphatic gesture of shielding the face or eyes with the hands; again in Homer, the nurse Eurycleia, when reminded of her old master Odysseus, "...covered her face with her hands and shed warm tears, speaking words of lamentation."⁹⁴ Likewise, in the twelfth century the Byzantine princess Anna Comnena reports

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, II (1934), no. 1. J. L. Schrader, "An Ivory Koimesis Plaque of the Macedonian Renaissance," *Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Bulletin*, N.S. vol. 3, no. 6 (1972), 71ff., esp. 80ff., discusses some of the gestures on this ivory.

⁹¹ "...iuvēnis anxius et cum quadam indignatione subtristis maxillam manu tenens.... *Epistulae*, XI, 4.

⁹² δάκρυ δ' ἀπὸ βλεφάρων χαμάδις βάλε πατὴρ ἀκούσας,
χλαῖναν πορφυρέην ἀντ' ὀφθαλμοῖν ἀνασχών
ἀμφοτέρησιν χερσίν.

Odyssey, IV, 114ff.

⁹³ ... τὰς τε βροχὰς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἄρασα τῇ ὀσόνῃ. Ed. J. Mavrogordato (Oxford, 1956), line 2215.

⁹⁴ ... γρη῏ς δὲ κατέσχετο χερσὶ πρόσωπα,
δάκρυα δ' ἔκβαλε θερμά, ἔπος δ' ὀλοφυδνὸν ἔειπεν·
Odyssey, XIX, 361-62.

that, at the death of her father, "I turned my head...stooping and silent I clasped my hands to my eyes, moved back, and wept."⁹⁵

In classical and Early Christian art we find that some of the variant forms of the gesture of resting the head on the hand could indicate thought or concentration without the connotation of sorrow. The artist of a wall painting at Pompeii depicted Penelope's hesitant deliberation before she believed the return of her husband by portraying her standing, holding her chin, as she gazed at Odysseus.⁹⁶ On a third-century sarcophagus in the Palazzo Sanseverino in Rome, a woman stands touching her cheek, absorbed in the words of a reading philosopher (fig. 30).⁹⁷ The carver of a fifth-century ivory in the British Museum depicted Thekla in the same pose, intent on the reading of St. Paul (fig. 31).⁹⁸ In Middle Byzantine art, however, we seldom find that standing figures who touch their cheeks or their chins occur in contexts of pensiveness alone; there is usually an overtone of sorrow.

In both classical and Byzantine art the gesture of raising the hand to the head occurred with the greatest frequency in scenes of mourning for the dead. Restrained poses of this type are often found in Greek funerary sculptures of the fourth century. The famous Weepers Sarcophagus from Sidon presents a gallery of standing female mourners, each in a subtly varied posture of pensive sorrow; one rests her chin on her hand, another lays her cheek on her palm, while another, more emphatically, presses her mantle against her eyes (fig. 33).⁹⁹ These poses also appear in funerary contexts in Roman art: the artist of a silver vase from Berthouville decorated with scenes from the Iliad depicts a group of Trojans mourning as Hector's body is weighed for ransom (fig. 34). To the right of the scales stands Priam, his right fingers touching his cheek. Two of his companions prop their chins on their hands, while another Trojan covers the left side of his face.¹⁰⁰

These attitudes of mourning were as frequent in the illustration of the Bible as of pagan mythology. Christian artists were more willing to accept into New Testament imagery these essentially passive gestures rather than more violent acts of lamentation, such as the tearing of hair and clothes or the beating of the head and chest. The gesture of resting the head on the hand is found in the most sacred contexts, such as the Crucifixion, and is made by persons of the greatest sanctity, even by angels. Only Christ himself did not bend to this expression of human grief. This was the case even in depictions of the Raising of Lazarus, the one occasion on which the Bible says outright that Christ himself wept (John 11:35-36). This scene is important for our understanding of the depiction of emotion in Early Christian and Byzantine

⁹⁵ ἔγωγε [μετα]κλίνασα τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτὸς καὶ ἀπόφυκτος ἦν πρὸς γῆν ἀπονεύσασα καὶ μηδὲν φεγγομένη καὶ τῷ χεῖρι τοῖς ὄψεσιν ἐπιβαλοῦσα καὶ ὀπισθόπους γενομένη ἐθρήνου. *Alexiad.* XV.11,19.

⁹⁶ S. Reinach, *Répertoire de peintures grecques et romaines* (Paris, 1922), 175, no. 2.

⁹⁷ A. Grabar, *The Beginnings of Christian Art* (London, 1967), fig. 128.

⁹⁸ Natanson, *Ivories*, 27, fig. 16; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 83, no. 117. The gesture of placing the hand on the cheek could also be associated with singing: see A. Hermann, "Mit der Hand Singen. Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung der Trierer Elfenbeintafel," *JbAChr*, 1 (1958), 105ff.

⁹⁹ O. Hamdy Bey and T. Reinach, *Une nécropole royale à Sidon* (Paris, 1892), 255ff., figs. 4-11.

¹⁰⁰ E. Babelon, *Le trésor d'argenterie de Berthouville* (Paris, 1916), 83, fig. 6.

art, since the expression of feeling in the Raising of Lazarus was the subject of considerable commentary by the writers of homilies. St. John Chrysostom, in two sermons devoted to the subject, placed his emphasis on moderation. As we have seen, he commended Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, for their self-control in their bereavement. He adds that Christ was indeed moved to weep in order that he might exhibit his human nature. But his grief was restrained: "Having rebuked his emotion...he checked his agitation, and so asks: 'Where have you laid him?'"¹⁰¹ Philagathus, in a mid-twelfth-century sermon, amplified John Chrysostom's remarks on the restraint displayed by Christ in his sorrow: "As his sacred flesh is troubled and inclines toward grief, he does not allow it to become overwhelmed by the emotion of his grief, but he censures it by the strength of the Holy Spirit, and in a manner reproves it."¹⁰² Another twelfth-century author, Mesarites, in his description of the mosaic in the church of the Holy Apostles, tells us that Mary and Martha displayed their sorrow, but on their faces, not through the violence of their gestures: "...on bent knees they are bowed over the feet of Jesus, washing them with the tears of their grief for their brother... The more vehement of the sisters holds her head high, and by the expression of her face alone, one might say, seeks to beseech the Lord, presenting her request to the Savior chiefly by means of her eyes and by the expression of suffering and grief on her whole face."¹⁰³ Although he saw suffering in the expressions of the sisters, Mesarites agreed with Philagathus and St. John Chrysostom that Christ himself checked his grief: "But the Savior is depicted with a moderately gloomy expression on his face, but his whole bearing is very kingly and censorious."¹⁰⁴

These written statements correspond with the iconography of the Raising of Lazarus in art. First, as I have noted, in Early Christian and in Middle Byzantine art Christ was never shown making a gesture of grief in this scene, but it was usual to depict him raising his arm in a pose of command as he ordered Lazarus to leave the tomb. Secondly, although the Gospel also refers to the weeping of Mary (John 11:33), Byzantine artists were more mindful of the self-discipline of the two sisters. Usually the women make no gestures of suffering, but on those rare occasions when Mary shows her grief her action is restrained. Thus, on a fifth-century ivory pyx in the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Mary holds her left hand against her chin,¹⁰⁵ and in the fresco of

¹⁰¹ Εἶτα ἐπιτιμήσας τῷ πάθει...ἐπέσχε τὴν σύγχυσιν, καὶ οὕτως ἐρωτᾷ, Ποῦ τεθείκατε αὐτόν; *In Joannem homilia* LXIII, PG, 59, col. 350; Millet, *Recherches*, 244f.

¹⁰² Ταρᾶσσομένης δὴ οὖν καὶ νεοῦσης πρὸς λύπην τῆς ἀγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκός, οὐκ ἀφίησιν τῷ τῆς λύπης πάθει γενέσθαι κατάφορον, ἀλλὰ τῇ τοῦ ἀγίου Πνεύματος δυνάμει ἐπιτιμᾷ ταύτη, καὶ ἐπιπλήττει τρόπον τινά· *Homilia* XXV, PG, 132, col. 532A.

¹⁰³ ...γονυκλιτοῦσαι τοῖς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ προσεπικυλινδοῦνται ποσί, πλύνουσαι τούτους ἐκ τῆς περὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν συμπαθείας τοῖς δάκρυσι... ἡ δὲ θερμότερα τῶν ἀδελφῶν καὶ ὑποῦ φέρει τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ αὐτοπροσώπως ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι τὸν κύριον ἐθέλει παρακαλεῖν, πλείστην ὄσσην κάκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν κάκ τοῦ περὶ πᾶν τὸ πρόσωπον περιπαθοῦς καὶ ὀδυνηροῦ τῷ σωτῆρι προσάγουσα τὴν παράκλησιν. Ed. Downey (note 55 *supra*), XXVI, 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ τὸ μὲν τοῦ προσώπου εἶδος ἐπὶ τὸ μετρίως στυγνόν, τὸ δὲ σύμπαν ἀνάστημα ἐπὶ τὸ βασιλικώτερόν τε καὶ ἐπιτιμητικώτερον ἐσχημάτισται· *Ibid.*, XXVI, 4.

¹⁰⁵ Schiller, *Iconography* (note 79 *supra*), I, 183, fig. 563.

1106 at Asinou on Cyprus she supports her cheek (fig. 35).¹⁰⁶ In both cases her pose conveys inner sorrow, and can be distinguished from the gesture of the man opening the tomb in the fresco: as in many other Byzantine portrayals of the scene, he holds his sleeve up against his nostrils on account of the corpse's stench (John 11:39). In addition, Middle Byzantine artists expressed the grief of the sisters through their facial expressions, just as Mesarites would have us believe. In the painting at Asinou short streaks run down their cheeks, a convention which, as we shall see below, portrays their tears. But, on the other hand, Christ's features betray little sign of emotion, as Mesarites also observed at the Holy Apostles.¹⁰⁷

The reserved quality of the gesture of raising one or both hands to the head made it especially suitable for the depiction of grief in the Crucifixion, and from the sixth century onward it was an essential element in the iconography of this scene. The earliest portrayal of the Crucifixion in which the pose occurs is the miniature in the *Rabbula Gospels*, written in Syria in 586 (fig. 36).¹⁰⁸ The painting is thus somewhat later than the early sixth-century *kontakion*, *Mary at the Cross*, by the Syrian poet Romanos, which contains one of the earliest descriptions of the Virgin's lament in Greek literature.¹⁰⁹ The artist has shown the Virgin, on the left of the three crosses, raising her draped hands toward her face, in order to dry her tears. Her gesture is completed by the foremost of the Holy Women standing on the right. St. John is shown resting his chin on his fingers, in an attitude of pensive sorrow. In the Crucifixion scenes which have survived from the years immediately after the end of Iconoclasm we find fewer bystanders in attitudes of mourning, but in later centuries there was a tendency for the number of subsidiary weepers to increase, so that by the end of the twelfth century the Crucifixion was often accompanied by a chorus of repeated gestures reiterating the theme of solemn sorrow. Thus, in the ninth-century miniatures of the Chludov and Pantocrator Psalters, the Virgin and St. John stand beneath the cross in isolated grief,¹¹⁰ while in the Paris Gregory three women stand to the left of the cross, but only the Virgin lifts her mantle toward her face (fig. 37).¹¹¹ By contrast, in an eleventh-century lectionary in the Vatican, gr. 1156, folio 194^v, the painter added two women in the background who weep into their garments, while the Virgin and St. John rest their cheeks on their palms (fig. 38).¹¹² Likewise, in eleventh-century mosaics and wall paintings

¹⁰⁶ D. C. Winfield and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Church of Our Lady at Asinou, Cyprus," *DOP*, 21 (1967), 260ff., fig. 2. Mary also makes a gesture of mourning in the eleventh-century fresco at S. Angelo in Formis (O. Demus and M. Hirmer, *Romanesque Mural Painting* [London, 1970], 294f., pl. 26) and in a twelfth-century icon at Sinai (Soteriou, Εἰκόνες [note 69 *supra*], II, 90f., I, pl. 76).

¹⁰⁷ The sisters' grief is most strikingly conveyed through facial distortion in the fresco at Kurbinovo: L. Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo* (Brussels, 1975), fig. 181.

¹⁰⁸ C. Cecchelli, G. Furlani, and M. Salmi, *The Rabbula Gospels* (Lausanne, 1959), 9f., fol. 13a.

¹⁰⁹ Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament* (note 11 *supra*), 62f.

¹¹⁰ J. R. Martin, "The Dead Christ on the Cross in Byzantine Art," *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.* (Princeton, 1955), pl. xxiii, 4 (Pantocrator. 61, fol. 98^r).

¹¹¹ Omont, *Miniatures* (note 36 *supra*), 13, fig. 21 (Paris. gr. 510, fol. 30^v).

¹¹² Millet, *Recherches*, 402ff., fig. 426.

we find the Holy Women echoing the sorrow of the principal mourners.¹¹³ Sometimes the meanings of the gestures were specified in an inscription, as in the cave church of Elmalı Kilise at Göreme, where we are told that the mother is lamenting and the Disciple weeping.¹¹⁴ Even the angels may come to show human feelings and, like the mortals, dry their tears. Though lamenting angels may appear as early as the eleventh century, they more frequently attend later Crucifixion scenes, such as the fresco of *ca.* 1200 in the Hermitage of St. Neophytos near Paphos (fig. 39).¹¹⁵

Thus, Byzantine artists from the tenth to the twelfth centuries introduced a widening refrain of mourning gestures to the Crucifixion scene. This development was noted by contemporaries who wrote on works of art. Constantine the Rhodian, describing the mosaic of the Holy Apostles in the tenth century, observes only the sorrow of St. John and the lamenting of the Virgin.¹¹⁶ But the twelfth-century Greek poet Eugenius of Palermo, in a description of a Crucifixion scene, draws attention to the sorrow displayed by the Virgin and her attendant as well as by angels: "The pair of Virgins here stand with downcast eyes, bearing with pain the Passion, and the rank of angels laments with them."¹¹⁷ Although the title of the poem does not specifically state it, the composition was in all probability inspired by a work of art, since the author declares at the beginning of the poem that he sees the Crucifixion before him.

By the eleventh century, Byzantine artists had also added a chorus of attendant weepers to depictions of the Entombment in order to bring extra pathos to the burial of Christ. Professor Weitzmann has traced the introduction of subsidiary mourners into the iconography of this scene. In the surviving ninth-century versions of the Entombment, such as the miniature in the Paris

¹¹³ See the mid-eleventh-century mosaic of the Nea Moni on Chios, and the fresco at Karabaş Kilise in Cappadocia, which was painted before 1061: G. Matthiae, *I mosaici della Nea Moni a Chios* (Rome, 1964), pls. 21, 23; Restle, *Wall Painting* (note 34 *supra*), I, 47ff., III, fig. 463.

¹¹⁴ Restle, *ibid.*, II, fig. 183; G. de Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, I, 2 (Paris, 1932), 445f. The date has been placed around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by several recent writers, including Restle, *op. cit.*, I, 57ff.; but de Jerphanion's old dating to the middle of the eleventh century still has many arguments in its favor: *op. cit.*, II, 2 (1942), 421f. See also N. Thierry, "Les peintures de Cappadoce de la fin de l'Iconoclasme à l'invasion turque (843-1082)," *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, N.S. 19, 1-2 (1966-67), 137ff., esp. 160ff.; and the new evidence presented by A. W. Epstein, "Rock-Cut Chapels in the Goreme Valley, Cappadocia: the Yılanlı Group and the Column Churches," *CahArch*, 24 (1975), 115ff.

¹¹⁵ C. Mango and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and its Wall Paintings," *DOP*, 20 (1966), 119ff., fig. 32. Weeping angels also attend the Crucifixion on two icons of the eleventh and twelfth centuries at Mount Sinai (Soteriou, *Elkónes* [note 69 *supra*], I, pls. 40, 77) and in a lost fresco of 1199 in the north transept of Nereditsa (V. Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics* [London, 1966], fig. 103).

¹¹⁶ Ed. E. Legrand, "Description des œuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apôtres de Constantinople: poème en vers iambiques par Constantin le Rhodien," *REG*, 9 (1896), 32ff., line 941ff. The date of the mosaic is uncertain; it is possible that it dated from the restoration of the building by Basil I. See C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972), 192, 199f.

¹¹⁷ *κᾶν ἡ ξυνωρίς παρθένων τῶν ἐνθάδε
ἔστη κατηφής, δυσφοροῦσα τῷ πάθει,
καὶ συσπενάζη τάξιν ἡ τῶν ἀγγέλων.*

Ed. M. Gigante, *Eugenii Panormitani versus iambici* (Palermo, 1964), no. 13. John Mauropous also described the grief of the angels in a painting of the Crucifixion: ed. Bollig and De Lagarde (note 81 *supra*), no. 7, line 8ff.

Gregory, folio 30^v (fig. 37), the burial of Christ by Joseph and Nicodemus takes place without onlookers.¹¹⁸ But in the eleventh-century miniature of the Theodore Psalter of 1066 in the British Museum, add. 19352, folio 116^r, the Virgin and two women, all in poses of weeping, follow behind the men carrying the body (fig. 40).¹¹⁹ One is struck by the exaggeration of the women's actions when they are compared with contemporary Crucifixion scenes. The Virgin covers the left half of her face with her upraised mantle, the woman behind her buries her face in her hands, and the third woman clasps her right hand over her mouth. The gestures of the women standing by the cross in the lectionary in the Vatican, gr. 1156, appear reserved by contrast (fig. 38). Already in the ninth century, George of Nicomedia foreshadowed this distinction between the Virgin's restraint at the Crucifixion and Deposition of Christ and her more vehement Lamentation over the dead body which followed: "But consider again the Mother, standing by and enduring, and exposed to everything. For she was associated with the Passion in a decorous and noble manner. . . . But when the most holy body had been taken down and had been laid upon the ground, she fell upon it and bathed it with the warmest tears."¹²⁰

Occasionally, Byzantine artists depicted Mary supporting her head on her hand in paintings of the Presentation, such as a miniature of an eleventh-century Gospel Book in Vienna, National Library, theol. gr. 154, folio 143^r (fig. 41).¹²¹ Her pose in this scene anticipates her suffering at Christ's death. St. Luke (2:35) records that when Symeon had taken the Child in his arms he prophesied to Mary: "A sword will pierce your own soul also." Byzantine writers imagined that Mary referred to this forecast when she delivered her lament at her son's burial.¹²² Mary's gesture, then, is a sign of grief, even though the Presentation might in other respects be considered a scene of joy.

The gesture of resting the head on the hand occurred in many other contexts besides that of mourners weeping for the dead. It could, for example, convey the idea of *Metanoia*, or regret for the past. To convey this meaning, artists often employed two specific variants of the gesture, those of holding the chin and of touching the cheek with the bare hand. These variants, as we have seen above, were associated with pensiveness as well as with sorrow in classical art, and thus were well suited to conveying the brooding quality of remorse (figs. 30, 31). On certain antique sculptures, *Metanoia* appears in person as the companion of *Kairos*, the personification of Opportunity. A third- or

¹¹⁸ Weitzmann, "Threnos" (note 5 *supra*), 476 ff., figs. 1 (Pantocrator Psalter, fol. 122^r), 2 (Chludov Psalter, fol. 87^r), and 4 (Paris Gregory, fol. 30^v).

¹¹⁹ Two mourning women also accompany the Entombment in the contemporary Paris. gr. 74, fol. 208^v: *ibid.*, fig. 6f.

¹²⁰ Ἀλλὰ σκόπει μοι πάλιν τὴν Μητέρα περισταμένην καὶ διακαρτεροῦσαν, καὶ πρὸς ἅπαντα προκειμένην· τῷ τε γὰρ πάθει κοσμίως καὶ οὐκ ἀγεννῶς προσωμίλει. . . . Ἐπεὶ δὲ κατηνέχθη, καὶ πρὸς τῇ γῇ τὸ πανάγιον ἀνεκλίσθη σῶμα, τοῦτω περιπεσοῦσα, αὐτὸ μὲν θερμωτάτοις κατέλουε δάκρυσι. *Homilia* VIII, PG, 100, cols. 1485D–1488A; the passage has been cited by Millet, *Recherches*, 398f.

¹²¹ H. Gerstinger, *Die Griechische Buchmalerei* (Vienna, 1926), 33f., fig. 13d.

¹²² Cosmas of Jerusalem, *Hymni*, VIII, *Pro magno sabbato*, PG, 98, col. 488C–D; Germanus, *In Dominici corporis sepulturam*, PG, 98, col. 272C; *Acta Pilati*, B.11.5, ed. C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1876). See also the *kontakion* on the Presentation by Romanos: P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis, *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica Genuina* (Oxford, 1963), IV, strophe 13.

fourth-century Coptic limestone relief from Thebes portrays *Kairos* as a winged youth holding a wheel (fig. 42). In the lower left corner of the carving is a kneeling woman supporting her head on the palm of her left hand. This is probably *Metanoia*, whom the fourth-century poet Ausonius, in a description of a work of art which he attributes to Phidias, refers to as the companion of Opportunity. In the poem, *Metanoia* declares that she is the Goddess who exacts penalties for what is done and what is not done.¹²³ The personification of Remorse was incorporated into Biblical iconography in the scene of David's penitence before Nathan. In a miniature of the tenth-century Paris Psalter, Bibl. Nat., gr. 139, folio 136^v, *Metanoia*, identified by an inscription, stands above the King as he kneels in *proskynesis*, the finger tips of her left hand almost touching her chin (fig. 43).¹²⁴

When *Metanoia* was not visible in person the gesture of touching the chin could convey hidden regret for past deeds. In the Old Testament it could signify the remorse of Adam and Eve after the Fall. We find Adam or Eve in this pose in a fourth-century fresco in the Roman catacomb on the Via Latina,¹²⁵ as well as in the miniatures of the Expulsion from Paradise in the Vienna Genesis, folio 1^v, and in a twelfth-century Octateuch in the Vatican, gr. 746, folio 44^r.¹²⁶

A parallel scene in the New Testament was Peter's remorse for his denials of Christ; here, again, we can trace the gesture from the fourth to the twelfth centuries. One of the earliest surviving depictions of Peter's grief is on the lid of the fourth-century ivory casket in Brescia. In front of Peter stands the maid who has challenged him, and behind the Apostle the cock crows on a pedestal. Peter stands between them, stooping his shoulders slightly and pensively bringing his hand to his cheek (fig. 44).¹²⁷ A sixth-century *kontakion* by Romanos imagines that Peter, with less reserve, "placed his hands on his head, and cried out."¹²⁸ The artistic counterpart to this is a most expressive miniature in the ninth-century Pantocrator Psalter (fol. 48) which isolates St. Peter and the crowing bird (fig. 45). He appears to cringe before the sound, with his left hand pressed under his chin and his right hand shielding the side of his head. A legend reads: "The tears of Peter."¹²⁹

¹²³ A. Muñoz, "Rappresentazioni allegoriche della 'Vita' nell'arte bizantina," *L'arte*, 9 (1906), 212ff., esp. 214; O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford, 1911), 158, fig. 65. Another late antique relief of *Kairos*, from Thasos and now in Istanbul, shows *Metanoia* standing with her hand touching her chin: Muñoz, *op. cit.*, 213, fig. 1. The same personification, standing with her left hand pressed against her cheek, again accompanies *Kairos* on a twelfth-century marble relief at Torcello: Dalton, *op. cit.*, 159, fig. 91; A. Grabar, *Sculptures byzantines du Moyen Age*, II (Paris, 1976), 115, fig. 91.

¹²⁴ H. Buchthal, *The Miniatures of the Paris Psalter* (London, 1938), 29, fig. 8.

¹²⁵ Grabar, *Beginnings of Christian Art* (note 97 *supra*), fig. 24.

¹²⁶ Gerstinger, *Die Wiener Genesis* (note 24 *supra*), fol. 1^v and fig. 47.

¹²⁷ J. Kollwitz, *Die Lipsanotek von Brescia* (Berlin, 1933), 15f., fig. 2.

¹²⁸ ἐπέθηκε χεῖρας ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ
ἐβόησεν

Ed. Maas and Trypanis, *Sancti Romani*, XVIII, strophe 19.

¹²⁹ Δάκρυ(α) τοῦ Πέτρου. Dufrenne, *Psautiers* (note 73 *supra*), 25, fig. 7. For eleventh- and twelfth-century examples, see Omont, *Evangelies* (note 26 *supra*), pls. 47, 85, 134, 136, 174 (Paris. gr. 74, fols. 56^r, 97^v, 157^v, 159^r, 204^r); and T. Velmans, *Le tétraévangile de la Laurentienne* (Paris, 1971), fig. 115 (Laur. VI.23, fol. 56^v).

In both classical and Byzantine times, the gesture of raising the hand to the face could indicate the grief of separation.¹³⁰ This is clearly the meaning of the pose in one of the Byzantine mosaics in the cathedral of Monreale, which was built and decorated by William II, King of Sicily, in the late twelfth century. Here we see the two disciples at table in a room at Emmaus, immediately after the risen Christ has vanished from their sight (fig. 46). The inscription above the scene quotes their words, recorded by St. Luke (24:32): "Did not our hearts burn within us on account of Jesus?" This mosaic is the third of a series of four at Monreale which depict the journey to Emmaus, the supper at the village, the disciples alone after Christ's departure, and the disciples informing the apostles. The third scene, showing the disciples alone, has no parallel in other cycles, and it has been suggested that it was inserted for compositional reasons in order to fill up the available wall space.¹³¹ In the mosaic, one of the two disciples at the table sits holding his cheek with his left hand. We find an explanation for his sorrowful gesture, and perhaps for the inclusion of the scene as a whole among the mosaics at Monreale, in a sermon by Philagathus, who during his career had preached in the Royal Palace at Palermo. In his homily he describes at length the bitter feelings which overtook the disciples at Emmaus following the sudden departure of Christ, whom they had only just recognized: "And having been seen he again concealed himself, and a new emotion took hold of the disciples, divided between joy and tears. Whom they sought, they had, and whom they had they did not recognize, and whom they found they lost. For having seen him they rejoiced, for having been deprived of him they wept. They were distressed not to have known him, they repented their rash discussion."¹³²

The episode, however, in which we most frequently find the expression of grief at separation is the Ascension. This emotion is probably portrayed in one of the earliest versions of the scene, the fifth-century wood panel from the doors of S. Sabina in Rome (fig. 47). In this carving, one of the four apostles who witness the Ascension sits in an attitude of complete repose, resting his head on his hand. His stillness contrasts with the more violent movements of his three companions. Commentators have variously seen this apostle as blinded by light,¹³³ as engaged in indifferent meditation,¹³⁴ or as feeling dejected.¹³⁵ The proponents of the first interpretation have supported

¹³⁰ A Pompeian painting of the parting of Briseis and Achilles provides a classical example of the gesture used with this meaning: Reinach, *Peintures* (note 96 *supra*), 167, no. 2. See also the Homeric passages quoted *supra*, notes 92 and 94.

¹³¹ Demus, *Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (note 69 *supra*), 163, 289, fig. 73B.

¹³² καὶ φανεῖς αὐτοῖς ἀπεκρύπτετο, καὶ πάθος τοὺς μαθητὰς κατελήφει καινόν, χαρὰ καὶ δάκρυσι μεριζόμενον. "Ὅν γὰρ ἐλήτουν, εἶχον, καὶ ὃν εἶχον ἠγνόουν, καὶ ὃν εὗρον ἀπώλεσαν· ἔχαιρον ἰδόντες, ἔκλαιον στερηθέντες, ἠνιῶντο μὴ γνωρίσαντες, μεταμελοῦντο ἐφ' οἷς προπετῶς διελέγοντο. *Homilia XXXII, In quintum Matutinum*, PG, 132, col. 656B.

¹³³ J. Wiegand, *Das altchristliche Hauptportal an der Kirche der hl. Sabina* (Trier, 1900), 66, fig. 14; S. H. Gutberlet, *Die Himmelfahrt Christi in der bildenden Kunst* (Strasbourg, 1935), 85; G. Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, III (Gütersloh, 1971), 147, fig. 457.

¹³⁴ S. Tsuji, "Les portes de Sainte-Sabine. Particularités de l'iconographie de l'Ascension," *CahArch*, 13 (1962), 13 ff., esp. 25 ff.

¹³⁵ H. Schrade, "Zur Ikongraphie der Himmelfahrt Christi," *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1928-29 (Leipzig, 1930), 66 ff., esp. 134.

their view with the observation that the apostle's eyes are narrowed or closed, as if against the brightness of the light. But this could also be a sign of sorrow, as we shall see below. The gesture made by the apostle is not one of shielding his eyes; his right hand supports his cheek and his elbow touches his knee, a pose frequently associated with sorrow in classical and Early Christian art. In addition, there was in the homilies a strong tradition drawing attention to the grief felt by the witnesses of the Ascension of Christ. John Chrysostom, for example, says of the apostles: "They grieved ever at the departure of Christ. . . . For if having friends and relatives we cannot bear to be separated from them, how would the disciples not grieve, seeing separated from them their Savior, their teacher, their guardian, who was humane, gentle, and good? How would they not feel pain? Therefore the angel stood by assuaging the pain arising from the Ascension by referring to the return."¹³⁶ The seated pose of the apostle on the S. Sabina doors does not recur in Ascension iconography. But on three sixth-century phials at Monza we find standing apostles who, as they witness the Ascension, raise their right hands to their chins. On phial number 11 two apostles, one of whom may be identified as St. Andrew on account of his wild hair, adopt this pose. On phials 14 and 16 we may distinguish one apostle on the left of the composition in the same attitude (fig. 48). His back is turned to the central axis so that, like the seated apostle on the S. Sabina door, he appears to be completely absorbed in his own brooding.¹³⁷

A mid-ninth-century painting in the lower basilica of S. Clemente in Rome depicts one apostle at the left of the scene making the stronger gesture of covering the side of his face with both his hands (fig. 49).¹³⁸ Since he does not cover his eyes, his pose probably expresses his grief rather than his blindness at the heavenly light. In the famous late ninth-century mosaic of the dome of St. Sophia in Salonika, one apostle clasps the lower part of his face between the thumb and fingers of his right hand, while another rests his cheek on his right palm (fig. 50).¹³⁹ It is very likely that the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI saw a figure holding his hand to his face in the Ascension mosaic in the church founded at the end of the ninth century by the official Stylianus. He describes the attitudes of the apostles: "One produces the impression of accompanying with his whole gaze Him who ascends. Another. . . appears to have opened his whole hearing and to be straining to draw in the sense of the words that resound above. And another, from amazement, is completely given to deep

¹³⁶ ἡλγουν αἰεὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναχωρήσει τοῦ Χριστοῦ. . . . Εἰ γὰρ φίλους ἔχοντες καὶ συγγενεῖς χωριζόμενοι τούτων οὐ φέρομεν, πῶς οἱ μαθηταὶ τὸν Σωτῆρα, τὸν διδάσκαλον, τὸν κηδεμόνα, τὸν φιλόανθρωπον, τὸν ἡμέρον, τὸν ἀγαθὸν ὁρῶντες χωριζόμενον αὐτῶν, πῶς οὐκ ἂν ἤλγησαν; πῶς οὐκ ἂν ὠδυνήθησαν; Διὰ τοῦτο ἐστῆκεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνόδου γινομένην λύπην διὰ τῆς ἐπανόδου πάλιν παραμυθούμενος. *In Ascensionem Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, PG, 50, col. 449. See also the description of the apostles' grief in the *kontakion* by Romanos: ed. Maas and Trypanis, *Sancti Romani*, XXXII, strophes 4-7.

¹³⁷ A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte* (Paris, 1958), pls. 19-21 (no. 11), 27 (no. 14), 29 (no. 16).

¹³⁸ E. W. Anthony, *Romanesque Frescoes* (Princeton, 1951), 66, fig. 47.

¹³⁹ Ch. Diehl, M. le Tourneau, and H. Ladin, *Les monuments chrétiens de Salonique*, *Monuments de l'art byzantin*, IV (Paris, 1918), 141 ff., fig. 45f.

thought. . . ."¹⁴⁰ If we compare this description with the mosaic in St. Sophia in Salonika, we find one apostle who is represented in an impossible contortion with his head twisted to one side (fig. 51). It is easy to see how such a figure could have given the impression of "straining" to hear the angels above, and how his pointing companion could have appeared to follow the ascending Christ with his "whole gaze" (fig. 52). Presumably, there was also an apostle in the mosaic described by Leo VI similar to the two apostles at Salonika with their heads resting on their hands, and it was this gesture which he interpreted as one of "deep thought" (fig. 50).^{140a} That the meditation was sorrowful may be inferred from another sermon by Leo VI which is devoted to the Ascension, but not specifically to a work of art. He describes the scene as "a most joyful spectacle, because of the promise of the Paraclete, but also bringing some gloom, I think, to the disciples, because the sweet presence and company of the Master was no longer to be with them in the flesh. For even if they had dissociated themselves to the furthest extent from all human feelings, I would not maintain that they did not experience a sharp grief thrusting through their insides. . . ."¹⁴¹

After the ninth century, we find that the gesture appears only sporadically in Ascension scenes. A prominent example occurs on the lid of an ivory casket in the Schlossmuseum at Stuttgart (fig. 53).¹⁴² Here one apostle appears to turn his back to his excited colleagues, burying his face in his right hand. Although the pose of this figure is in striking contrast to those of his companions, there is nothing in his attitude which cannot be accounted for by earlier depictions of the Ascension. We have seen that there are parallels in ninth-century and pre-iconoclastic art for the withdrawn attitude of the apostle (St. Sophia in Salonika, Monza phial 16, the doors of S. Sabina in Rome: cf. figs. 50, 48, 47). The ninth century also provided precedents for the turning pose (St. Sophia in Salonika: cf. fig. 52) and for the concealing of the face (S. Clemente in Rome: cf. fig. 49).¹⁴³ The gesture of resting the head

¹⁴⁰ 'Ο μὲν γὰρ τις δόξαν παρέχεται, ὡς ὅλον μετὰ τοῦ ἀνιόντος συνεκπέμπων τὸν ὀφθαλμόν· ὁ δὲ τις πρὸς τὰ ἄνωθεν ὑπηχοῦμενα. . . ὅλην ἀναπετάσας ὁρᾷ τὴν ἀκοήν, καὶ συντείνων εἰς τὸ σπᾶσαι τῶν λαλουμένων τὴν σύνεσιν· καὶ ἄλλος ὑπ' ἐκπλήξεως γέμει συννοίας. . . Ed. Akakios, Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ πανυγηρικοὶ λόγοι [sic] (Athens, 1868), no. 34, p. 278; trans. A. Frolov, "Deux églises byzantines," *EtByz*, 3 (1945), 53.

^{140a} In a paper published while this article was in press, R. Cormack has also associated Leo's description with the mosaic in St. Sophia: "Painting after Iconoclasm," in *Iconoclasm*, ed. A. Bryer and J. Herrin (Birmingham, 1977), 162f.

¹⁴¹ Ὡς θεάματος ἡδίστου μὲν διὰ τὴν τοῦ Παρακλήτου ἐπαγγελίαν, φέροντος δὲ τι καὶ στυγνόν, ὡς ἐγὼ οἶμαι, τοῖς μαθηταῖς, διὰ τὴν οὐκέτι μετ' αὐτῶν ἐσομένην σαρκὶ γλυκεῖαν τοῦ Διδασκάλου παρουσίαν καὶ ἀναστροφὴν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ πάντων ἀνθρωπίνων ἀπωτάτω δισστήκεσαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε οὐκ ἂν φαῖν αὐτοὺς μὴ παθεῖν, τὸ μὴ δριμεῖαν ὁδύνην διὰ τῶν ἐγκάτων ἐλάσαι αὐτῶν. . . In *Dominicam Assumptionem*, PG, 107, col. 117A-B.

¹⁴² K. Weitzmann, "The Survival of Mythological Representations in Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Their Impact on Christian Iconography," *DOP*, 14 (1960), 43ff., esp. 62f., fig. 34. Weitzmann and others have dated this ivory to the tenth century, but the thirteenth has recently been proposed by K. Wessel, "Himmelfahrt," *RBK*, II (1971), col. 1248. Wessel has also presented a more detailed discussion of the iconography and style, in "Das byzantinische Elfenbeinkästchen in Stuttgart," *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg*, 11 (1974), 7ff.

¹⁴³ Weitzmann, *loc. cit.*, has suggested that the pose was derived by the carver directly from a representation of Agamemnon in the Sacrifice of Iphigeneia of the type preserved on the Ara of Cleomenes in Florence. If so, this would be a case of revival on the basis of survival similar to that of Adam and the Lysippan Hercules, discussed above.

on the hand also appears in a few eleventh- and twelfth-century paintings of the Ascension. We find apostles depicted in this attitude in the Ascension frescoes of the Churches with Columns at Göreme¹⁴⁴ and in the fresco of St. George at Staraya Ladoga.¹⁴⁵ Thus, in the Ascension, as in many other scenes, the depiction of grief through the gesture of supporting the head on the hand was a continuous tradition from the Early Christian period to the twelfth century.

4. *The Hand Clasped to the Mouth*

In some of the scenes discussed in the previous section, a very emphatic gesture occasionally appears, that of clasping one or both hands over the mouth. We have seen this action in a tenth-century ivory of the *Koimesis* (fig. 32)¹⁴⁶ and in an eleventh-century miniature of the Entombment (fig. 40). In the context of mourning, the gesture seldom occurred in Hellenistic art or in Christian art before Iconoclasm, but it became relatively frequent after the ninth century.¹⁴⁷ Mourners in the sixth-century Vienna Genesis, such as those lamenting Deborah or Jacob, may wipe their tears from their faces, but they do not make the specific gesture of clapping their bare hands over their mouths (figs. 5, 54).¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, the latter gesture is frequent in the death-bed miniatures of the eleventh- and twelfth-century Octateuchs, such as the death of Jacob in Vat. gr. 747, folio 71^v (fig. 6).¹⁴⁹

In Middle Byzantine art the gesture had two related meanings. The rarer meaning was simple silence or speechlessness, a subject which was illustrated in eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts of the *Heavenly Ladder* by John Climacus. For example, in a miniature at Princeton, Garrett 16, folio 85^r, we find silence personified by a monk putting his right hand to his mouth and holding up his left hand with the palm outward to quiet his garrulous companion.¹⁵⁰ The gesture also probably signifies speechlessness in depictions of the Ascension. In the mid-ninth-century fresco of the Ascension in S. Clemente in Rome, one of the apostles standing on the right of the scene claps one hand over his mouth, while in his other he holds a scroll (fig. 49). An explanation of his actions may be found in a poem by the seventh-century Pope Honorius I, which describes "The Apostles in Amazement at the Ascen-

¹⁴⁴ Restle, *Wall Painting* (note 34 *supra*), II, figs. 189, 213, 214, 241.

¹⁴⁵ Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals* (note 115 *supra*), fig. 88.

¹⁴⁶ For other examples of this gesture in *Koimesis*, see J. Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (Harmondsworth, 1970), fig. 197 (late tenth- or eleventh-century steatite in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna); Hamann-Mac Lean and Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei* (note 39 *supra*), fig. 26 (eleventh-century fresco in St. Sophia, Ohrid); I. Tolstoi and N. P. Kondakov, *Russkija drevnosti*, VI (St. Petersburg, 1899), fig. 228 (fresco in the Mirož monastery, Pskov).

¹⁴⁷ For one of the rare Greek examples, a fourth-century tomb relief on which a mourner presses her tightly draped hand against her lips, see Bieber, *Sculpture* (note 60 *supra*), 64, fig. 206.

¹⁴⁸ Gerstinger, *Die Wiener Genesis* (note 24 *supra*), 96, 110, fols. 13^v, 24^v.

¹⁴⁹ See also Ouspensky, *L'Octateuque de la Bibliothèque du Sévail* (note 70 *supra*), fig. 84 (fol. 140^v, Death of Jacob), fig. 288 (fol. 245^v, Entombment of Gideon); D. C. Hesseling, *Miniatures de l'Octateuque grec de Smyrne* (Leyden, 1909), fig. 146 (fol. 59^v, Death of Jacob).

¹⁵⁰ Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, 31, fig. 41. See also the manuscript on Sinai, gr. 418: *ibid.*, 92, fig. 191. On the gesture of silence, see A. Grabar, "Une fresque visigothique et l'iconographie du silence," *CahArch*, 1 (1945), 124-28.

sion of Christ to the Heavens." Honorius characterizes the fear of each disciple in turn, saying of Matthew that he "...spoke through writing, like a mute, for fear assailed the old man so that he kept silent what he knew."¹⁵¹ The apostles also cover their mouths with their hands in the tenth-century Ascension painting at Ayvalı Kilise in Cappadocia.¹⁵²

The second and more common meaning of the gesture in Byzantine art was that of stifling cries of suffering, to which several surviving inscriptions attest. For example, a miniature on folio 6^v of the *Penitential Canon* in the Vatican, gr. 1754, shows a group of standing monks, three of whom cover their mouths with their hands, beneath a legend which reads: "These...cry aloud and beat themselves, unable to bear the affliction of their hearts" (fig. 55).¹⁵³ The caption to the following picture, which shows one of a group of monks putting his hand to his lips, gives a still more explicit explanation of the gesture: "These, stifling the noise of lamentation in the mouth, bellow in the heart only. But sometimes, when they cannot bear the force of their grief, they suddenly shriek out loud."¹⁵⁴ In the frescoes of the church at Asinou there is another inscription which implies that this gesture signifies the curbing of cries of pain. The inscription takes the form of a short poem painted above the early twelfth-century fresco of the Forty Martyrs freezing to death by the lake at Sebaste (fig. 56). In the painting, several of the half-naked martyrs show the tortures which they are undergoing by hugging themselves for warmth¹⁵⁵ or by the mild gesture of supporting their cheeks or their chins on their hands. One, however, in the second row from the top, covers his mouth, and his silent action may be referred to in the legend: "Winter it is that causes pain, flesh it is that suffers here. If you give your attention, you will hear even the groans of the martyrs. But if you do not hear them, they are steadfastly enduring the violence [of the cold]. They look on their crowns, and not on their toils."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ *Matthaeus, muto similis, per scripta locutus:*
Nam timor invasit nota silere senem.

De Apostolis in Christi ad coelos Ascensione obstupescensibus, PL, 80, col. 483B.

¹⁵² N. and M. Thierry, "Ayvalı Kilise ou pigeonier de Gülli Dere," *CahArch*, 15 (1965), 97ff., figs. 3, 4.

¹⁵³ Οὔτοι...ὀλολύλουσι κοιπτόμενοι· τὴν συνοχὴν τῆς ἑαυτῶν καρδίας μὴ φέροντες. Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, 133, fig. 254.

¹⁵⁴ Οὔτοι τῷ στόματι τὸν τοῦ ὀδυρμοῦ φόρον κωλύον(ε)ς, τῇ καρδίᾳ μόνῃ βρύχουσι(ν)· ἔστι δὲ ὅτε τὴν βίαν τῆς ὀδύνης μὴ φέροντες, αἰφνιδίως κράζουσιν. *Ibid.*, 133, fig. 255.

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion of this gesture of physical suffering, which appears in several other contexts, including the Last Judgment and the *Penitential Canon*, see O. Demus, "Two Palaeologan Mosaic Icons in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *DOP*, 14 (1960), 87ff., esp. 106f.

¹⁵⁶ Χειμῶν τὸ λυποῦν, σὰρξ τὸ πάσχον ἐνθάδε·
προσχῶν ἀκούσεις καὶ στεναγμούς μαρτύρων·
εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀκούσῃ, καρτεροῦσι τὴν βίαν
πρὸς τὰ στέφη βλέποντες οὐ πρὸς τοὺς πόνους.

The text of the inscription was incorrectly restored by W. H. Buckler, "The Church of Asinou, Cyprus, and its Frescoes," *Archaeologia*, 83 (1933), 327f., esp. 340. A more recent reading of the inscription by I. Ševčenko shows that its words correspond to those of an epigram preserved in a manuscript in Florence which contains a collection of pieces attributed to Manuel Philes: ed. E. Miller, *Manuelis Philae carmina*, I (Paris, 1855), 438, no. 241. The groaning of the martyrs also survived as a convention in Palaeologan art, for in a mosaic icon at Dumbarton Oaks one of the victims covers his mouth with his left hand: Demus, "Mosaic Icons," fig. 3.

These inscriptions help to explain why the gesture of covering the mouth was more common in Middle Byzantine art than it had been beforehand. Classical artists, and to a lesser extent Early Christian artists, had added drama to their scenes of suffering by opening the mouths of victims to express their utterances of pain (figs. 82, 71). Indeed, this device was deemed by classical critics to have been one of the great discoveries of ancient art.¹⁵⁷ But the actors in Middle Byzantine art only rarely part their lips;¹⁵⁸ instead, they suppress their cries with their hands. This gesture, then, was a substitution, an act of drastic restraint, which was depicted by Middle Byzantine artists when the context called for the voicing of grief. Such a context was the lamenting of Job's three friends, as shown in a miniature of the ninth-century Job manuscript in the Vatican, gr. 749, folio 29^v. The text (Job 2:12) says that the friends, when they first saw Job, "...wept aloud, rent their cloaks, and tossed dust into the air over their heads." Accordingly, the miniature depicts one pouring dust onto himself, another tearing his tunic from his chest, and the third claspings his left hand over his mouth (fig. 57). The gesture also depicts the wailing of sinners in Hell (Matt. 25:30) in the Pantocrator Psalter, folio 23^r, and in the mosaic at Torcello.¹⁵⁹

The virtual substitution of this gesture for the open-mouthed figures of classical art shows that the Byzantines came to rely more on gestures than on facial expressions for the depiction of emotion in their art. This important departure from the classical tradition will be examined in more detail below.

5. *The Hands Clasped Together*

The least conspicuous of the gestures through which Byzantine artists expressed sorrow was that of clasping the hands together.¹⁶⁰ Both sitting and standing figures were shown in this pose. In the case of standing figures, the arms generally fall in front of the body and the hands are either cupped, with the fingers intertwined, or crossed, with one hand clasping the other wrist. The former variant of the pose was more common in classical art, the latter in medieval. In both periods the gesture was employed in the context of mourning. In an illustration from Homeric mythology on the silver vase from Berthouville, old Nestor stands in mourning at the head of the corpse of Patroclus with his head bowed, his hands lowered, and his fingers intertwined (fig. 34).¹⁶¹ In Christian art we can trace the gesture in the Crucifixion from the sixth century to the Palaeologan period. Its reserved statement of grief was particularly suitable for this scene. We find it first on two phials at Monza, where we see the Virgin standing on the left of the cross, her hands

¹⁵⁷ According to Pliny, the discovery was made by Polygnotus: *Naturalis historia*, XXXV, 58.

¹⁵⁸ See *infra*, note 257.

¹⁵⁹ Dufrenne, *Psautiers* (note 73 *supra*), I, fig. 3; A. Grabar, *Byzantine Painting* (Geneva, 1953), plate on p. 120.

¹⁶⁰ For this gesture in classical art, see Kenner, *Weinen und Lachen* (note 13 *supra*), 49f.

¹⁶¹ Babelon, *Berthouville* (note 100 *supra*), 82f., fig. 6. Further examples in D. C. Shorr, "The Mourning Virgin and St. John," *ArtB*, 22 (1940), 61ff.

crossed in front of her and her arms held out slightly from her body (fig. 58).¹⁶² The meaning of the pose was certainly appreciated by Byzantines at this period, as we may judge from a sixth-century description by Christodorus of a statue in the Zeuxippus Gymnasium at Constantinople: "Clytius stood at a loss; he had his two hands twined together, messengers of hidden sorrow."¹⁶³

In ninth- and tenth-century versions of the Crucifixion the gesture was still used to express the sorrow of the bystanders. The artist of the Paris Gregory, folio 30^v, depicted St. John holding his left wrist with his right hand (fig. 37),¹⁶⁴ and the Apostle was shown in the same attitude with the positions of the hands reversed on a tenth-century ivory of the Crucifixion in the Louvre.¹⁶⁵ In the eleventh-century fresco at S. Angelo in Formis, which was painted under strong Byzantine influence, the gesture again portrayed the grief of Mary.¹⁶⁶ It survived in the iconography of the Crucifixion until the late thirteenth century, when we once more find St. John crossing his hands in the fine mosaic icon of the Crucifixion at Berlin.¹⁶⁷

In the twelfth century we discover the gesture for the first time in a number of other scenes of mourning, and it is very possible that the pose was transferred into these new subjects from the iconography of the Crucifixion. The painter of the church of St. George at Kurbinovo, for example, made use of the gesture twice, once for St. John in the Deposition, and a second time in the *Koimesis* for an apostle whose hunched shoulders intensify the effect of the pose (fig. 59).¹⁶⁸

The gesture also served to convey the grief of captives, both in classical and in Christian art. On a Roman battle sarcophagus in the Museo Nazionale in Rome, a male prisoner stands to one side of the composition holding his left wrist in his right hand, while a woman on the other side stands with her hands lowered and her fingers intertwined (fig. 60).¹⁶⁹ On several fourth-century Christian sarcophagi showing the arrest of St. Peter, of which the best known is that of Junius Bassus in the Vatican,¹⁷⁰ we find the captive Apostle standing between two soldiers with his hands lowered and joined before him. On another sarcophagus in the Museo Pio Cristiano (formerly Lateran Museum, no. 171) we find Christ himself making this gesture in a scene which appears to represent the crowning with thorns (fig. 61). Christ stands with his arms lowered and his right hand clasping his left wrist; in his left hand he holds a scroll. A

¹⁶² Grabar, *Ampoules* (note 137 *supra*), 25f., figs. 16 (no. 10), 18 (no. 11).

¹⁶³ Ειστήκει Κλυτίος μὲν ἀμήχανος· εἶχε δὲ δοῖας
χεῖρας ὁμοπλεκέας, κρυφίης κήρυκας ἀνίης.

Anthologia Palatina, II, line 254f.; Kenner, *Weinen und Lachen*, 50.

¹⁶⁴ Omont, *Miniatures* (note 36 *supra*), 13, fig. 21.

¹⁶⁵ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, no. 99, pl. 38. See also the later ivory of the Crucifixion in Leningrad: *ibid.*, no. 201, pl. 66.

¹⁶⁶ A. Moppert-Schmidt, *Die Fresken von S. Angelo in Formis* (Zurich, 1967), 85, fig. 19.

¹⁶⁷ V. Lazarev, *Storia della pittura bizantina* (Turin, 1967), fig. 427.

¹⁶⁸ Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 436, figs. 178a-b.

¹⁶⁹ G. Hamberg, *Studies in Roman Imperial Art* (Copenhagen, 1945), pl. 40; see also the battle sarcophagus in the Museo Nazionale at Palermo: *ibid.*, pl. 39.

¹⁷⁰ Wilpert, *Sarcophagi* (note 67 *supra*), I, pl. 13. See also pls. 137,2 (fragment in the Museo di S. Sebastiano), 142,2 (tree sarcophagus in the Museo di S. Sebastiano), 142,3 (Museo del Laterano, no. 164).

soldier beside him holds a wreath over his head. Wilpert commented that the sculptor transformed the soldier's mockery into an act of homage, and that the crown of thorns has become the laurel wreath of divine triumph.¹⁷¹ The gesture of crossed hands, however, may still refer to Christ's suffering as a mortal captive. Christ stands in the same pose, holding his left wrist with his right hand, in a miniature of the Mocking in the early twelfth-century Gospel Book in the Biblioteca Laurenziana, VI. 23, folio 58^r (fig. 62). Here, however, he is not being crowned, but is meekly watching a derisive dance.¹⁷² This is one of the few surviving instances in Middle Byzantine art in which Christ himself makes a gesture of grief.¹⁷³

Remorse, also, was occasionally indicated by this pose. A scene on a sarcophagus in the Museo Pio Cristiano (formerly in the Lateran, no. 183), which portrays Peter's final denial of Christ, shows the Apostle standing with his head bowed and holding his right wrist in his left hand.¹⁷⁴ The gesture does not appear to have had a further history in this scene. But it recurs with the connotation of remorse in the illustrations of the penitent monks in manuscripts of the *Heavenly Ladder* and of the *Penitential Canon*. On folio 15^r of the *Penitential Canon* in the Vatican, gr. 1754, for example, one of a group of monks stands with his hands lowered in front of him and his wrists crossed. The legend attached to the miniature stresses the passivity of the monks' poses: "These, subdued by despondency, stand voiceless and motionless, gazing fixedly on the ground."¹⁷⁵

In the classical period artists often portrayed seated figures with their hands joined in grief. Pausanias, in his account of the painting of Odysseus in Hades by Polygnotus, describes the form which the seated pose usually took: "Hector, sitting, holds both hands around his left knee, in an attitude of distress."¹⁷⁶ On the silver vase from Berthouville a mourner seated in this position watches over the body of Patroclus (fig. 34). Both St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nyssa refer to this pose as a sign of sorrow, and it occurs as such in Christian art of the sixth century.¹⁷⁷ For example, the mother of

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I, pl. 146,3; II (1932), 320.

¹⁷² Velmans, *Le tétraévangile de la Laurentienne* (note 129 *supra*), 33, fig. 118; Millet, *Recherches*, 640, fig. 636. Christ assumes the same pose at his trial before Pilate in the Gospels of the Athens National Library, MS 93, fol. 83^v.

¹⁷³ The icon of the "Christ of Pity," in which the dead Christ is shown with his arms bent and his wrists crossed in front of his stomach, does not borrow from scenes of the condemnation and mocking of Christ, but from portrayals of corpses. In the twelfth-century Octateuchs, Jacob is depicted lying on his deathbed with his hands in the same position as those of the "Christ of Pity": Hesselring, *L'Octateuque grec de Smyrne* (note 149 *supra*), fig. 147 (fol. 62^v); Ouspensky, *L'Octateuque de la Bibliothèque du Sérail* (note 70 *supra*), fig. 87 (fol. 153^v).

¹⁷⁴ Wilpert, *Sarcofagi*, text vol. I, 128; plate vol. I, pl. 8,4.

¹⁷⁵ Οἱ τοῦ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀθυμίας καταπονηθέντες, ἄφωνοι καὶ ἀκίνητοι ἵστανται· εἰς γῆν τὸ ὄμμα ἐρείσαντες. Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, 140, fig. 269. See also fol. 7^r in the same manuscript (*ibid.*, 133, fig. 255), and Vat. gr. 394, fol. 412^v (*ibid.*, 60, fig. 83). The gesture also occasionally conveyed the grief of separation; see, for example, the apostle standing at the right end of the upper row in the Ascension scene on the ivory casket at Stuttgart (fig. 53).

¹⁷⁶ Ἐκτὼρ μὲν καθεζόμενος ἀμφοτέρως ἔχει τὰς χεῖρας περὶ τὸ ἀριστερὸν γόνυ, ἀνιωμένου σχῆμα ἐμφαίνων. *Graeciae descriptio*, X.31,5.

¹⁷⁷ St. Basil, *Homilia dicta tempore famis et siccitatis*, PG, 31, col. 308A–B; St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio contra usurarios*, PG, 46, col. 441A.

Joseph sits clasping her hands around her right knee in the ivory panel on the Throne of Maximian which depicts Joseph's brothers presenting his blood-stained coat to Jacob (fig. 3).¹⁷⁸ After the sixth century the seated pose seems to have been employed very rarely in Byzantine art, but it was not altogether forgotten; this is demonstrated by the twelfth-century fresco of the Lamentation in the Mirož monastery at Pskov, in which a woman sits among a crowd of mourners with her hands joined together around her knee (fig. 63).¹⁷⁹

To sum up, the gesture of clasping the hands together, like that of supporting the head, was indicative of inner sorrow. Its reserved character made it particularly suitable for sacred figures and scenes, so that even Christ himself appeared in this pose. The gesture had a classical origin, and in the case of standing figures it survived into Middle Byzantine art as a result of a continual process of transmission.

6. *The Veiling of the Head*

One of the stock tales of ancient art history, which was related by several writers, concerns the ingenuity of the painter Timanthes when he wished to convey a sorrow so extreme as to be inexpressible. Here is Quintilian's version of the anecdote: "When, in the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, he had painted a sad Calchas, and a sadder Ulysses, and had added to Menelaus the greatest grief that art could convey, having exhausted the emotions, since he could not find a worthy means of expressing the face of her father, he veiled his head. . . ." ¹⁸⁰ This trick can be seen in surviving versions of the Sacrifice of Iphigeneia, such as the well-known painting from Pompeii in which Agamemnon's mantle is drawn over his head and he covers his face with his right hand.¹⁸¹

Timanthes, however, did not invent the device of veiling the features. Already in Homer we read of Priam mourning Hector, sitting in his palace "close-wrapped in his mantle."¹⁸² Odysseus, too, hearing a minstrel sing of his quarrel with Achilles, "...took his great purple cloak with his strong hands, and drew it over his head, and covered his handsome face; for he was ashamed before the Phaeacians as he shed tears from beneath his eyebrows."¹⁸³ The motif of veiling the head was particularly common in Greek

¹⁷⁸ On a sixth-century ivory pyx in the Louvre, one of the mothers of the murdered Innocents sits in a similar pose (fig. 7); see *supra*, note 33. See also the painting of the suffering prophet Jeremiah in the Rabbula Gospels: Cecchelli *et al.*, *The Rabbula Gospels* (note 108 *supra*), 59, fol. 8^r.

¹⁷⁹ Tolstoi and Kondakov, *Russkija drevnosti* (note 146 *supra*), VI, fig. 222. In the Nativity mosaic at Hosios Lukas the grieving Joseph sits holding his left wrist in his right hand (fig. 28).

¹⁸⁰ *Nam cum in Iphigeniae immolatione pinxisset tristem Calchantem, tristiores Ulixen, addidisset Menelao, quem summum poterat ars efficere, maerorem, consumptis adfectibus, non reperiens, quo digne modo patris vultum posset exprimere, velavit eius caput et suo cuique animo dedit aestimandum.* Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, II.13.13. The same story was quoted by Valerius Maximus, *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium liber*, VIII.11.6; and by Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, XXXV, 73.

¹⁸¹ Reinach, *Peintures* (note 96 *supra*), 169, no. 4. Agamemnon's head is also veiled in the relief on the circular altar at Florence: *idem*, *Reliefs* (note 50 *supra*), III, 31, no. 2.

¹⁸² ἔντυπας ἐν χλαίνῃ κεκαλυμμένος: *Iliad*, XXIV, 163.

¹⁸³ αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
πορφύρεον μέγα φᾶρος ἑλὼν χερσὶ στιβαρῆσι
κάκ κεφαλῆς εἵρυσσε, κάλυψε δὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα·
αἶδετο γὰρ Φαίηκας ὕπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυα λείβων.

Odyssey, VIII, 83 ff.

and Roman funerary art. Sculptors of the fourth century often showed the *beginning* of the action rather than its accomplishment: the mourners or the deceased pull tentatively at their mantles, as if they are about to draw them across their faces, though their features remain uncovered. Thus, on the stele of Kalliarista from Rhodes, the dead woman sits with her mantle drawn up over the back of her head. She raises her right hand to her shoulder, and pulls at the drapery.¹⁸⁴ Several of the women represented on the Weepers Sarcophagus from Sidon also hold their mantles at their shoulders (fig. 33).¹⁸⁵

This tentative gesture of veiling survived in Early Christian and Byzantine art. We find it on the early fifth-century ivory plaque in the British Museum which shows the two Maries sitting by the tomb. The women have their mantles drawn over the tops of their heads, and the one on the left clasps the edge of her garment with her left hand, as if to pull it across her face (fig. 17). A particularly suggestive Early Christian example is found on a sarcophagus from the church of St.-Orens in Auch, now in the Musée des Augustins at Toulouse.¹⁸⁶ In the scene of the Sacrifice of Isaac, the sculptor has depicted Sarah, standing behind her son, with the top and back of her head covered by her robe (fig. 64).¹⁸⁷ She raises her left hand and holds the cloth by her neck, as if she were about to hide her face. This may be interpreted as a sign of Sarah's grief, for a contemporary writer, St. Gregory of Nyssa, imagined her lament on the impending sacrifice of her son.¹⁸⁸ The use of the veiling motif here evokes the parallels between this Biblical episode and the myth of Agamemnon and his daughter Iphigeneia. A Byzantine writer of the sixth century, Christodorus of Thebes, still appreciated the significance of the action, for he describes it twice. He says of a statue of Hecuba: "Your cloak overhanging your face indicates your miseries. . . ."¹⁸⁹ And of another statue, of Creusa, he explains: "She drew her veil over both her cheeks, and covered her whole body with a long gown, as if she were weeping."¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Clairmont, *Gravestone and Epigram* (note 49 *supra*), no. 32, pl. 16. See also the gravestone of Polyxena in the National Museum at Athens: *ibid.*, no. 50, pl. 23.

¹⁸⁵ Hamdy Bey and Reinach, *Sidon* (note 99 *supra*), 255 ff., figs. 4–11. This gesture could take one of two forms. In the first variant the left hand holds the left edge of the mantle, or the right hand the right edge, so that the elbow is sharply bent. In the second variant, the arm crosses the body, so that the left hand holds the right side of the cloth, or vice versa. The first variant was more common in classical art, and can be seen on the Weepers Sarcophagus (fig. 33), while the second was more frequent in Byzantine art, e.g., Mary in the Crucifixion mosaic at Hosios Lukas (fig. 65). However, the second version was known in Antiquity (e.g., on an Attic grave relief, no. 1156 in the Athens National Museum) and the first also survived into the Middle Ages (fig. 66).

¹⁸⁶ Wilpert, *Sarcofagi* (note 67 *supra*), text vol. II, 234, plate vol. II, pl. 182, 1.

¹⁸⁷ The appearance of Sarah in this scene is rare but not unique; she was included in a painting of the Sacrifice of Isaac in Chapel 80 at El-Bagawât, and identified there by an inscription: A. Fakhry, *The Necropolis of El-Bagawât in Kharga Oasis* (Cairo, 1951), 72, fig. 63.

¹⁸⁸ *Oratio de deitate Filii et Spiritus Sancti*, PG, 46, col. 569.

¹⁸⁹ φᾶρος γὰρ ἐπικρεμὲς ἀμφὶ προσώπῳ
πήματα μὲν δείκνυσιν. . . .

Anthologia palatina, II, line 183 f.

¹⁹⁰ ἀμφὶ γὰρ αὐταῖς
ἀμφοτέραις κρήδεμνον ἐφελκύσσασα παρειαῖς,
πάντα πέριξ ἐκάλυψε ποδηγεκὶ χρόα πέπλῳ,
οἷά τε μυρομένη·

Ibid., line 149 ff.

In Middle Byzantine art the gesture of pulling at the robe in order to veil the face survived in the iconography of the Crucifixion. On a late tenth-century ivory at Quedlinburg, the Virgin stands by the cross holding her maphorion at the right side of her neck with her left hand.¹⁹¹ In the eleventh-century mosaic at Hosios Lukas, Mary subtly alludes to her grief by grasping her mantle in her fingers, just below her neck, as a prelude to covering her head (fig. 65).¹⁹² We find the gesture repeated in the mosaic of St. Mark's in Venice.¹⁹³ But the most expressive example of the gesture in a Byzantine Crucifixion scene is undoubtedly a fourteenth-century icon in the Byzantine Museum at Athens.¹⁹⁴ Here the Virgin, wrapped in a deep blue *maphorion*, draws it taut across her face, a quiet signal of her intense sorrow (fig. 66).

The passive gesture of pulling at the mantle in order to cover the head was, therefore, also inherited by Byzantine artists from antique art. Furthermore, its classical source and literary associations seem to have been understood by the Byzantines in the Middle Ages, or at least by their scholars. This is confirmed by the twelfth-century writer Eustathius, commenting on the passage of the *Iliad* in which Priam sits wrapped in his mantle, mourning his son: "The poet, not being able to confer on the old man the appropriate extremity of grief, covers him, and not only makes him silent, but not even visible. Hence, they say, the painter Timanthes of Sicyon, painting the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Aulis, covered Agamemnon . . ."¹⁹⁵

7. *The Arms Thrown Upward*

Some of the gestures in Byzantine art were ambivalent, in that they could convey opposing emotions, such as grief and joy, according to their context.¹⁹⁶ A dramatic example is the action of throwing up the arms, with the palms outspread, which occurs in scenes widely differing as to mood and content. Like the other gestures examined above, this pose had classical precedents. The earliest literary reference, in Homer's *Odyssey*, associates it with mirth. The poet tells us how the suitors of Penelope, when they saw the combat of the two beggars Ulysses and Irus, "...held up their hands and died with laughter."¹⁹⁷ In the Hellenistic period, Apollonius Rhodius describes how a mother "...held her hands aloft through joy" on being reunited with her sons.¹⁹⁸ Other classical writers linked the action with surprise or alarm.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹¹ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, no. 25, pl. 8.

¹⁹² Diez and Demus, *Byzantine Mosaics in Greece* (note 82 *supra*), 68, fig. 13.

¹⁹³ S. Bettini, *Mosaici antichi di San Marco a Venezia* (Bergamo, 1944), pl. 24.

¹⁹⁴ K. Weitzmann, M. Chatzidakis, K. Miatev, and S. Radojčić, *Frühe Ikonen* (Vienna, 1965), 33, fig. 55.

¹⁹⁵ "Υπερβολὴν γάρ, φασὶ πένθους ἄξιαν οὐχ εὐρίσκων ὁ ποιητὴς τῷ γέροντι περιθεῖναι, καλύπτει αὐτόν, καὶ οὐ μόνον σιγῶντα ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ μηδὲ βλέπόμενον. Ἐντεῦθεν, φασίν, ὁ Συκωνῖος γραφεὺς Σημάνθης τὴν ἐν Αὐλίδι γράφωσαν σφαγὴν τῆς Ἰφιγενείας ἐκάλυψε τὸν Ἀγαμέμνονα . . . *Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, XXIV, 163.

¹⁹⁶ See Kitzinger, "Hellenistic Heritage" (note 3 *supra*), 113.

¹⁹⁷ χεῖρας ἀνασχόμενοι, γέλω ἔκθανον. *Odyssey*, 18, line 100.

¹⁹⁸ . . . ὑποῦ χάρματι χεῖρας ἀνέσχεθεν. *Argonautica*, III, line 257.

¹⁹⁹ See, for example, the description of Alcmena frightened by the struggle between the infant Hercules and the snakes, in Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines*, V, 2.

The gesture seems to combine the two meanings of joy and surprise in a painting of the ballot for the arms of Achilles on a red-figured bowl in the Kunsthistorisches Museum at Vienna. Here the victor, Odysseus, raises his hands in exultation on seeing the votes cast in his favor. The loser, Ajax, stands to the side, sulking and propping his head up on his hand (fig. 67).²⁰⁰

Byzantine artists, like their classical predecessors, used the gesture of raising the arms to signify joy. A striking example is the depiction of jubilation in the heavens which accompanies the Annunciation in two twelfth-century manuscripts of the Homilies of James of Kokkinobaphos. In the miniature of the manuscript in Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 1208, folio 173^v, we see Gabriel approaching Mary, who turns to address her visitor, while in the sky there are eight angels holding up their arms and turning around at different angles to us (fig. 68).²⁰¹ The explanation for these gyrating angels can be found in the text of the homily, which describes how, when Mary acquiesced to the will of God, "all the intellectual powers exulted. . ." and "heaven on high rejoiced exceedingly. . . ." ²⁰² The Byzantines, like the ancients, saw not only joy but also surprise in the action of raising the arms. The scholar Eustathius, in his commentary on the Homeric passage cited above, tells us that the laughing suitors "...held up their hands, in the usual posture of amazement."²⁰³ Astonishment, as well as delight, may be illustrated in a thirteenth-century wall painting in the church of St. Sophia at Trebizond, which shows a man throwing up his arms as he witnesses the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand (fig. 69).²⁰⁴

The same action, however, could also portray grief, both in classical and in medieval art. In the miniature of Dido's death in the Vatican Virgil, to cite only one of many examples, a disheveled handmaiden standing behind the pyre lifts her hands in lamentation (fig. 2). Her gesture was retained to illustrate the grief of Old Testament mourners in the Vienna Genesis. In the miniatures of the death of Deborah, folio 13^v (fig. 5), and of the burial of Jacob, folio 24^v (fig. 54), the women throw their arms up with a vehemence that equals, if not exceeds, that of their mythical forerunners in the Virgil manuscript. Although these emphatic actions do not recur in the deathbed scenes of the Octateuchs, Jacob's sons express their grief by raising their arms in the fresco of the Patriarch's death at Sopoćani (fig. 70).²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Neumann, *Gesten* (note 13 *supra*), 99, 141 f., fig. 44; Kenner, *Weinen und Lachen* (note 13 *supra*), 73.

²⁰¹ See also the miniature of the copy in the Vatican, gr. 1162, fol. 127^v: C. Stornajolo, *Miniature delle omilie di Giacomo Monaco* (Rome, 1910), 15, pl. 56.

²⁰² Ἐσκήρτησαν πᾶσαι νοεραὶ Δυνάμεις. . . ἡγαλλίασας τὸ ἄνωθεν ὁ οὐρανὸς. . . PG, 127, col. 653A.

²⁰³ . . . μνηστῆρες δὲ χεῖρας ἀνασχόμενοι, κατὰ σχῆμα ἐκπλήξεως σύνηθες. . . *Commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam*, XVIII, 100.

²⁰⁴ D. Talbot Rice, *The Church of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond* (Edinburgh, 1968), 129 f., fig. 6. The gesture also conveys the astonishment, or even alarm, of the witnesses of miracles and prodigies in the Octateuchs. See, for example, the miniatures of Moses changing the waters to blood (Ouspensky, *L'Octateuque de la Bibliothèque du Sévail* [note 70 *supra*], fol. 176^v, fig. 106; Hesseling, *L'Octateuque grec de Smyrne* [note 149 *supra*], fol. 72^v, fig. 164), of the Israelites following the pillar of fire (Ouspensky, *op. cit.*, fol. 195^v, fig. 120; Hesseling, *op. cit.*, fol. 80^v, fig. 178), and of the fire and earthquake on Sinai (Ouspensky, *op. cit.*, fol. 217^r, fig. 133; Hesseling, *op. cit.*, fol. 90^r, fig. 188).

²⁰⁵ Kitzinger, "The Hellenistic Heritage" (note 3 *supra*), 112, fig. 29.

The gesture also occasionally conveyed the grief of the mothers of the Innocents. The earliest and most convincing example is to be found on a fifth-century ivory plaque in Berlin (fig. 71).²⁰⁶ Here the mother stands, looking up with an agonized expression at her child which a soldier is about to dash to the ground; by holding up her empty hands she stresses her inability to intervene. In an eleventh-century miniature of a Gospel Book in Paris, gr. 74, folio 5^r, we find that the gesture conveys the lamentation of a mother whose child has already been murdered, so that now she looks down at the infant lying dead on her lap (fig. 8).²⁰⁷

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Byzantine artists introduced the gesture into two other scenes of mourning, the *Threnos* and the *Koimesis*. Presumably they borrowed it from episodes such as the Massacre of the Innocents and the deathbed scenes of the Old Testament, in which the gesture already had a longer history. We find that in the mid-eleventh-century *Koimesis* in the church of St. Sophia at Ohrid an apostle standing on the left of the Virgin's bed raises his hands above his shoulders.²⁰⁸ The same gesture is made by an apostle standing behind the Virgin's couch in a miniature of a Gospel Book in the British Museum, Harley 1810, folio 174^r.²⁰⁹ However, it was less frequent in the *Koimesis* than in the *Threnos*, in which, by the twelfth century, a mourner throwing up her arms often appeared in the background of the scene, for instance, in the frescoes at Pskov (fig. 63) and at Kurbinovo (fig. 72).²¹⁰ In each of these paintings this figure contrasts with one of her more passive companions, at Pskov with a mourner who sits clasping her hands around her knee, and at Kurbinovo with a seated weeper who dries her tears. Miniaturists also portrayed these opposing styles of grief among the mourners in order to heighten the drama of the *Threnos*.²¹¹

Thus, the same gesture could portray an abandon of joy, surprise, or sorrow, depending on the context. Both the pose itself and its flexibility of meaning had been inherited by the Byzantines from the traditions of classical art.

8. *The Embrace*

A significant innovation of Middle Byzantine artists was to expand the cycle of Christ's Passion with the addition of the Deposition and the Lamentation. In both these scenes the focus of the composition came to be Mary's action of clasping her son's body, often so that their faces were pressed together

²⁰⁶ Natanson, *Ivories*, 26, fig. 12; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 80, no. 112. See also the late fifth-century ivory book cover in Milan Cathedral, where one of the mothers incorporates the gesture into a dance of grief: Kitzinger, *op. cit.*, 113, fig. 32.

²⁰⁷ The restored mosaic of the Massacre at Monreale also preserves this gesture. Originally there was an inscription reading *Rachel plorat filios suos*: Demus, *Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (note 69 *supra*), 273f., fig. 66A. See also the miniature in the Karahissar Gospels in Leningrad, Public Library, gr. 105, fol. 13^r: Millet, *Recherches*, 160f., fig. 114.

²⁰⁸ Hamann-Mac Lean and Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei* (note 39 *supra*), 15ff., fig. 26.

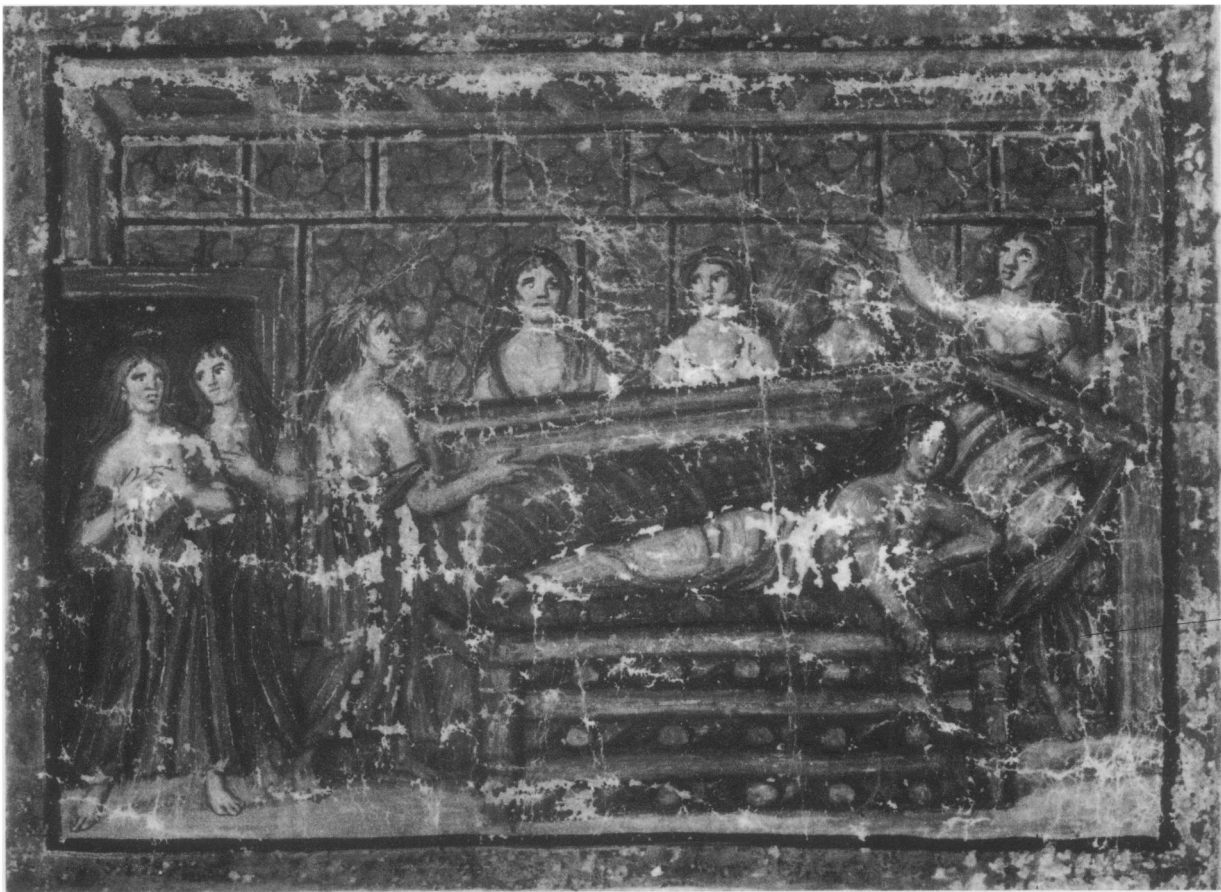
²⁰⁹ Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (note 123 *supra*), 265, fig. 161.

²¹⁰ Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 155, figs. 74–75.

²¹¹ See, for example, the miniatures of the lectionary in the Vatican, gr. 1156, fol. 194^v (fig. 38), and of the gospels in Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 5, fol. 90^v (Millet, *Recherches*, fig. 531).



1. Rome, Palazzo Sciarra. Sarcophagus, The Death of Meleager



2. Bibl. Vat., lat. 3225, fol. 41r, The Death of Dido



3. Ravenna. The Chair of Maximianus, detail

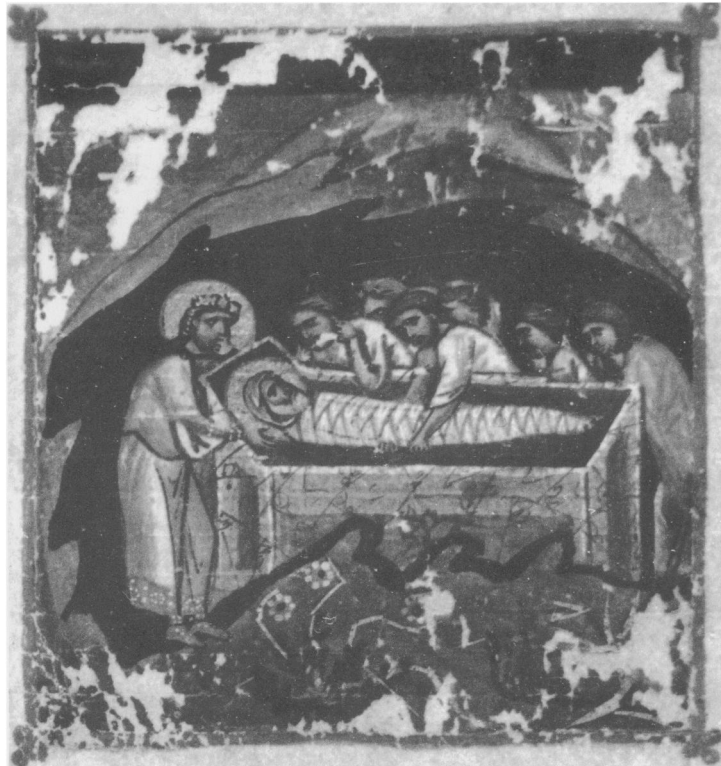


4. Bibl. Vat., gr. 747, fol. 59r

Jacob Receives Joseph's Coat



5. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, theol. gr. 31, fol. 13v, detail, The Death of Deborah and The Entombment of Rachel



6. Bibl. Vat., gr. 747, fol. 71v, The Burial of Jacob



7. Paris, Louvre. Pyx



8. Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 74, fol. 5r

The Massacre of the Innocents



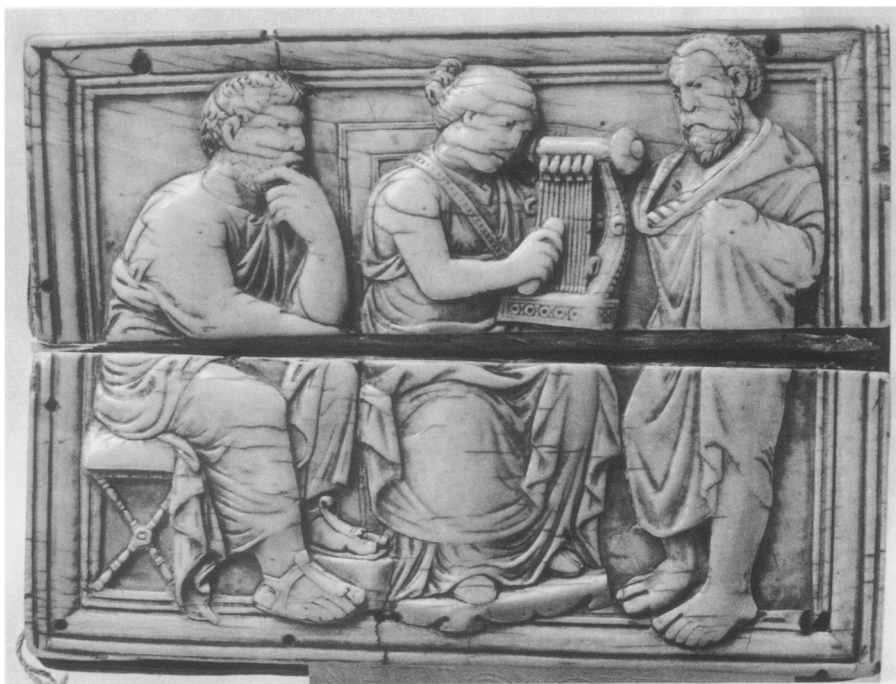
9. Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 510, fol. 3r, The Annunciation, The Visitation, and The Story of Jonah



10. Bibl. Vat., gr. 1754, fol. 6r, Penitents



11. Sopoćani, Church of the Trinity. Fresco, The *Koimesis*, detail



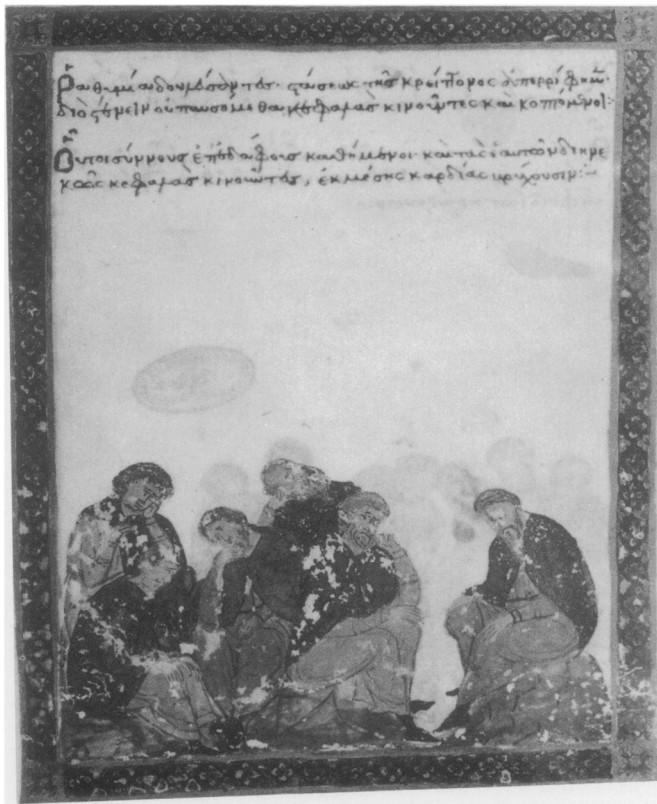
12. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. Ivory, Poets and Muse



13. Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 510, fol. 52v, detail, The Expulsion from Paradise and Adam's Remorse



14. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery. Ivory Casket, detail, Adam's Remorse



15. Bibl. Vat., gr. 1754, fol. 7v, Penitents



16. Ostia. Sarcophagus, detail,
The Tomb of Meleager



17. London, British Museum. Ivory, The Marys at the Tomb



18. Leningrad, Public Library, MS 21, fol. 8v, detail



19. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, gr. qu. 66, fol. 96r

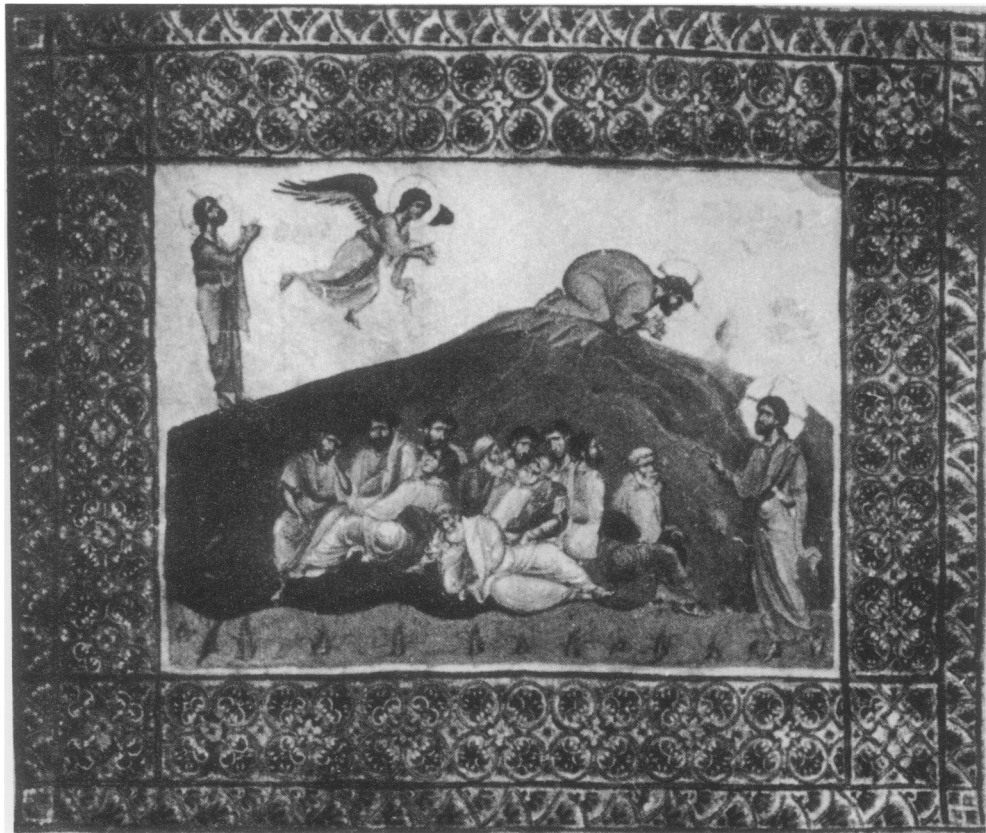
The Marys at the Tomb



20. Xanten. Ivory Casket, detail, The Hercules of Lysippus



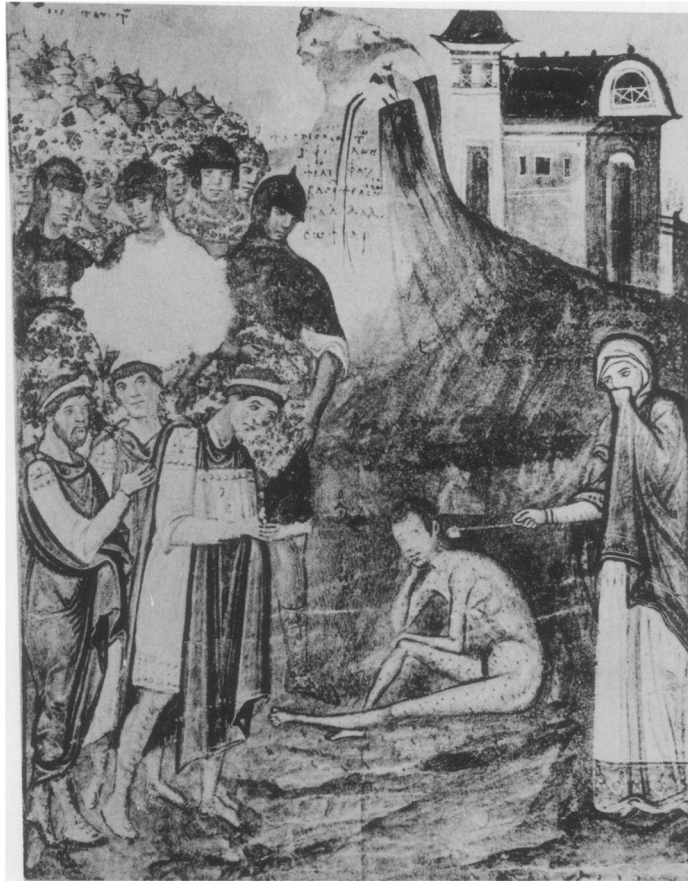
21. Princeton, University Library, Garrett 16, fol. 112r,
Monks Asleep during Prayer



22. Mt. Athos, Dionysiu, MS 587, fol. 66r, The Agony in the Garden



23. Istanbul, Seraglio, Octateuch, fol. 359r, The Brazen Serpent



24. Bibl. Vat., Regin. gr. 1, fol. 461v, Job



25. Coin of Vespasian, *Judaea capta*



26. Moscow, Historical Museum, add. gr. 129, fol. 135r,
The Hebrews Weeping by the Waters of Babylon

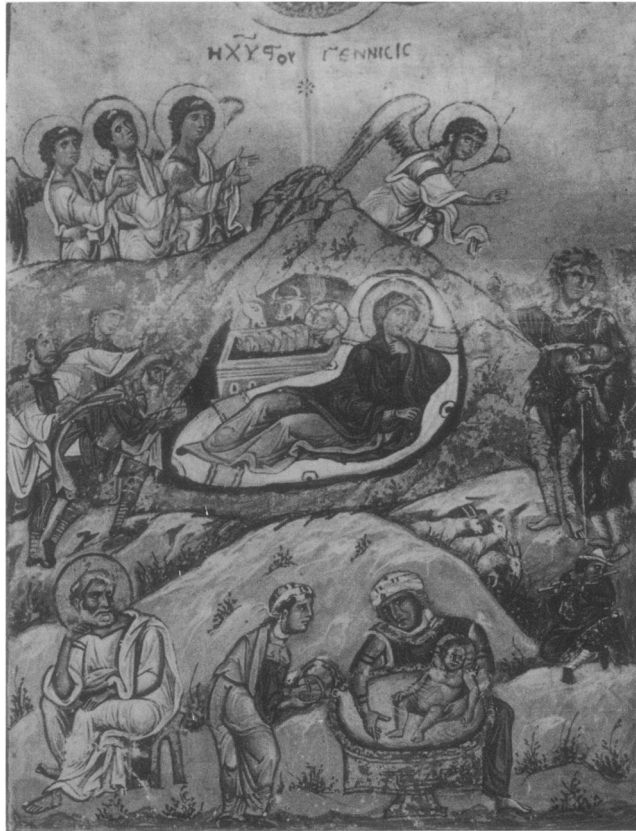


27. Bibl. Vat., gr. 1613, page 271



28. Phocis, Hosios Lukas. Mosaic

The Nativity



29. Mt. Athos, Great Lavra, Skevophylakion, Lectionary, fol. 144^v, The Nativity



30. Rome, Palazzo Sanseverino. Sarcophagus, detail, Philosopher Reading



31. London, British Museum. Ivory, St. Paul and Thekla



32. Munich, Staatsbibliothek. Ivory, The *Koimesis*



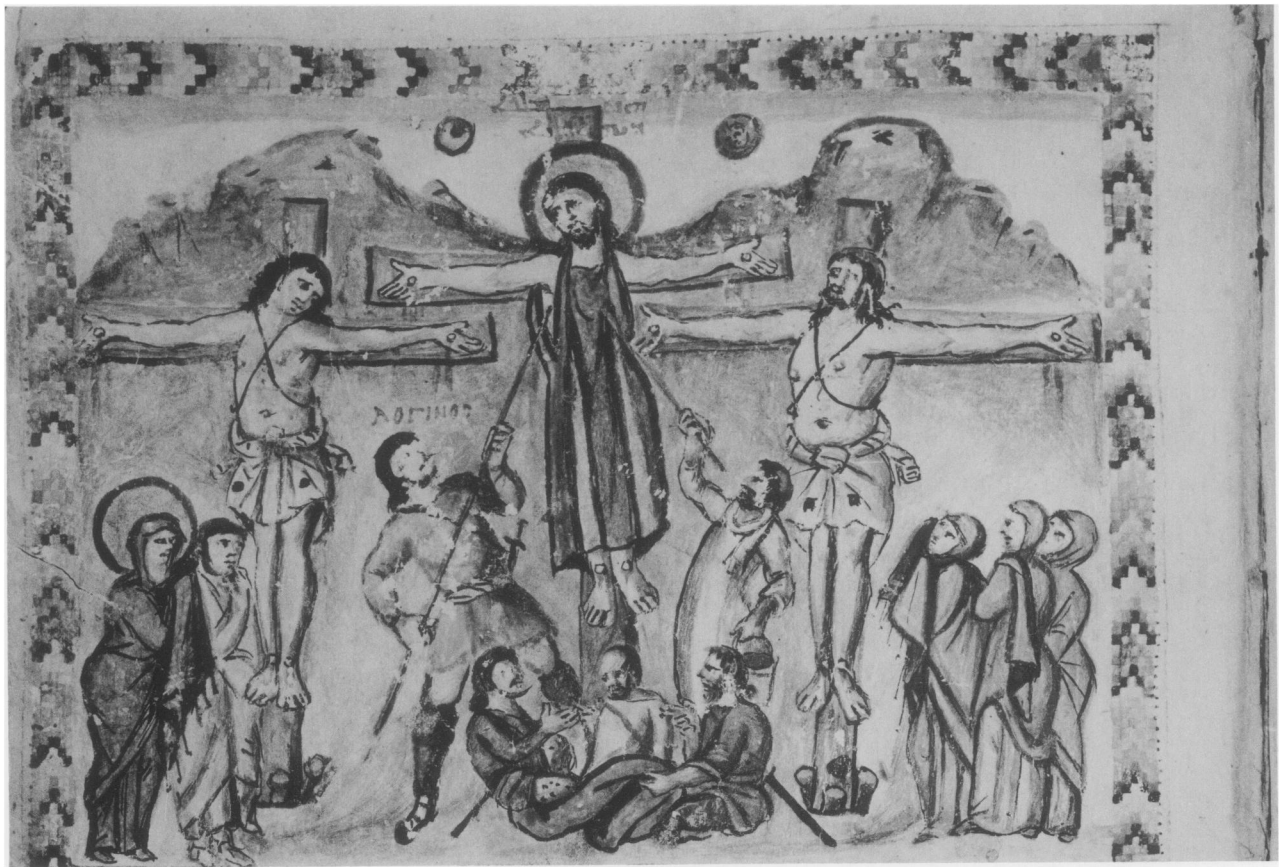
33. Istanbul, Archaeological Museum. The Weepers Sarcophagus, detail



34. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles. Silver Vase, detail, The Death of Patroclus and The Weighing of Hector's Body



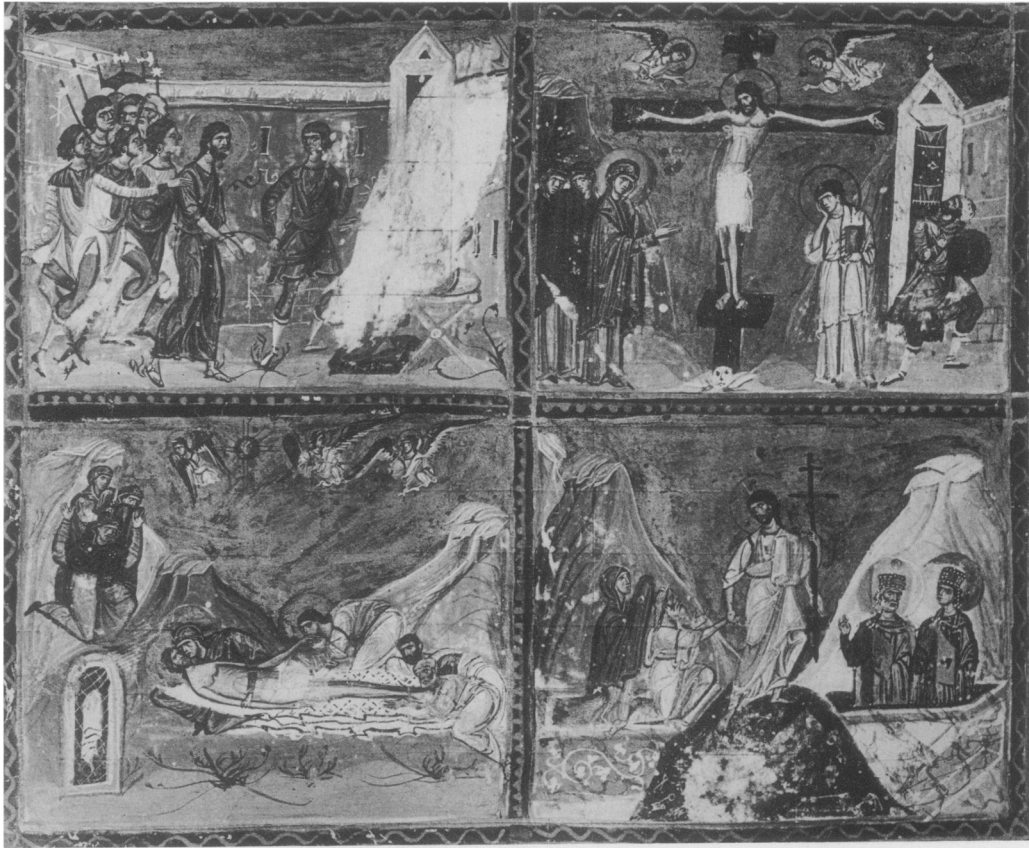
35. Asinou, Church of Our Lady. Fresco, The Raising of Lazarus



36. Florence, Bibl. Laur., Plut. I.56, fol. 13r, The Crucifixion



37. Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 510, fol. 30v, The Crucifixion, The Deposition, and The Entombment



38. Bibl. Vat., gr. 1156, fol. 194v, The Passion and The Anastasis



39. Paphos, Monastery of St. Neophytos, *Enkleistra*. Fresco, The Crucifixion



40. London, British Library, add. 19352, fol. 116r, The Entombment



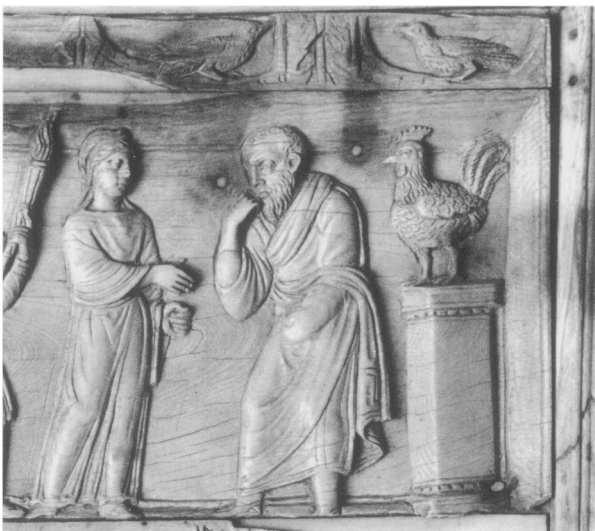
41. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, theol. gr. 154, fol. 143r, The Presentation



42. Cairo. Relief of *Kairos*



43. Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 139, fol. 136v, David's Penitence



44. Brescia, Museo Civico. Ivory Casket, detail



45. Mt. Athos, Pantocrator, gr. 61, fol. 48r

Peter's Denial



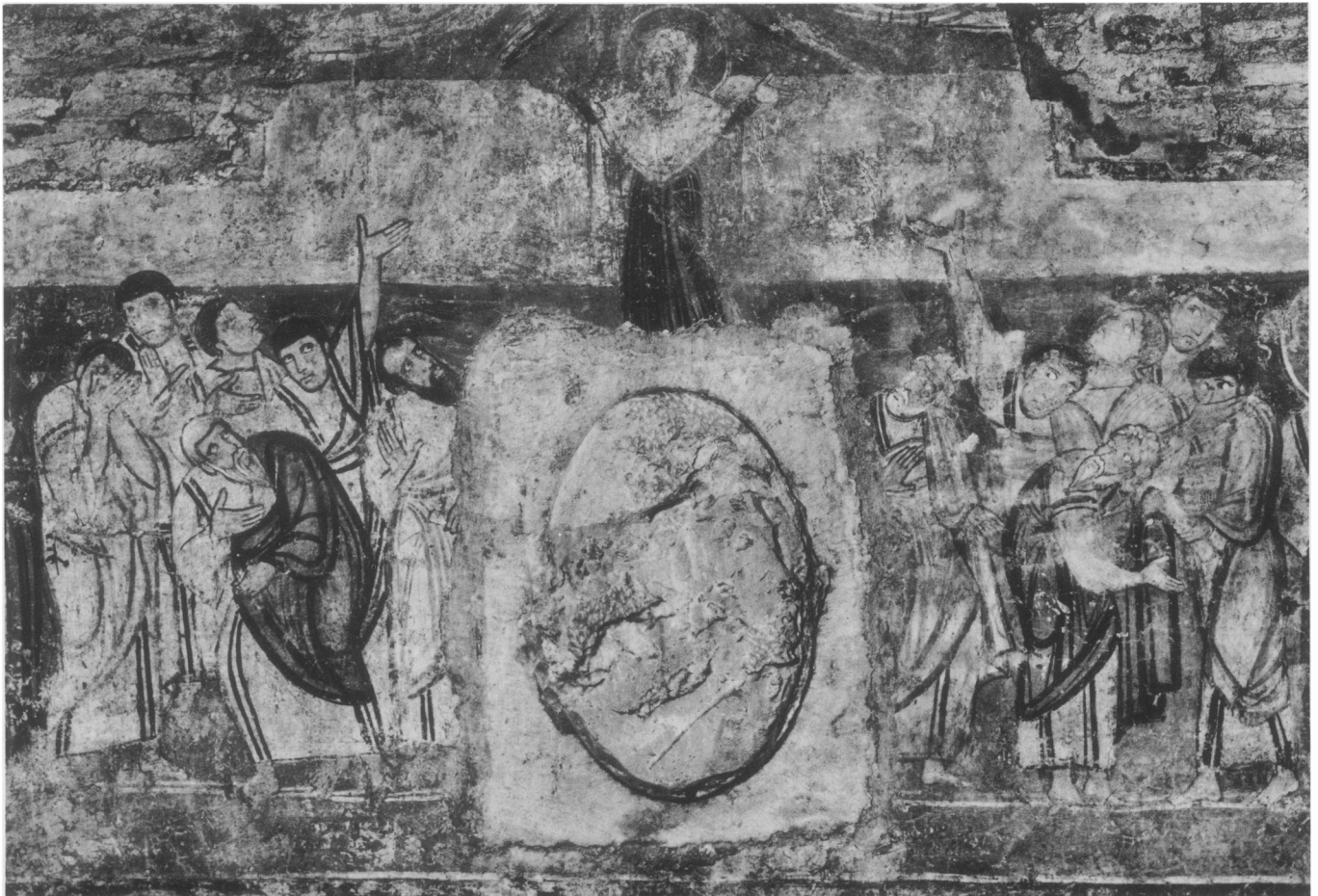
46. Monreale. Mosaic, The Disciples at Emmaus



47. Rome, S. Sabina. Wooden Door, detail,
The Ascension



48. Monza, Cathedral. Ampulla



49. Rome, S. Clemente. Fresco
The Ascension



50.



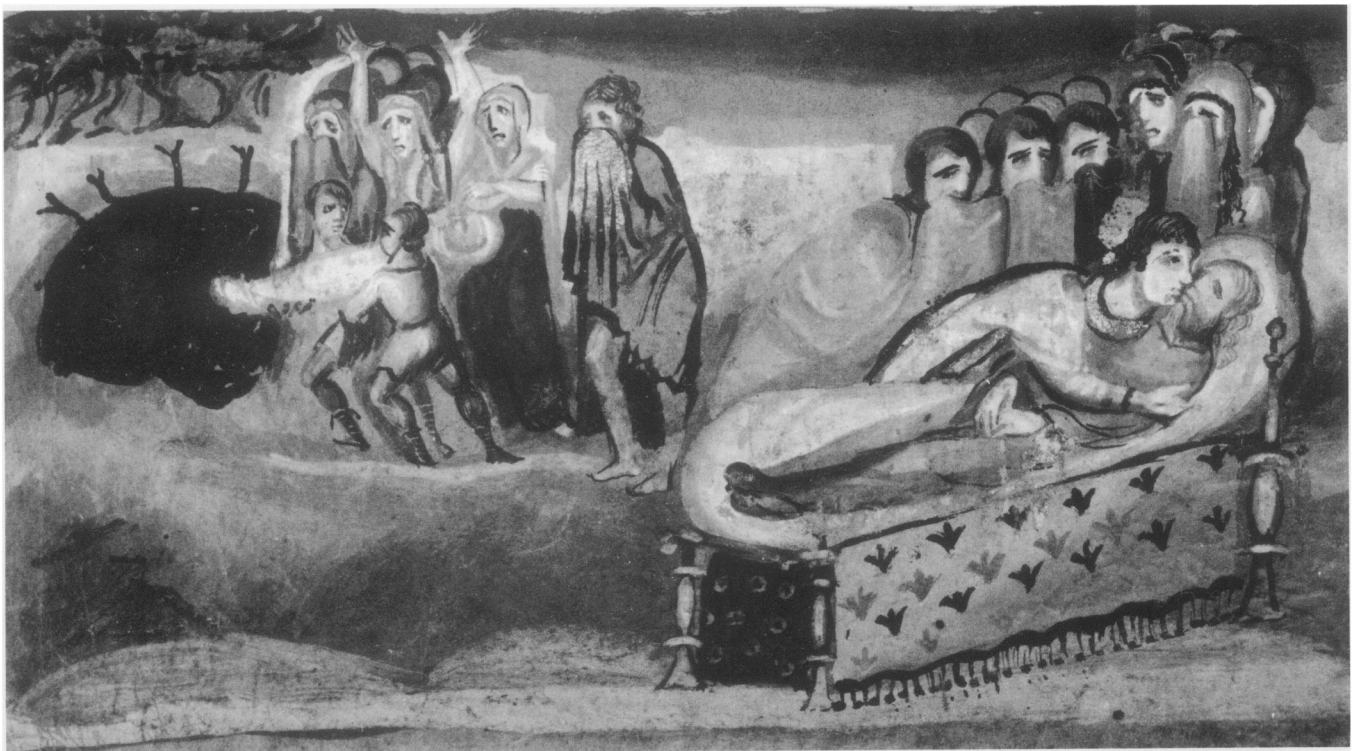
51.



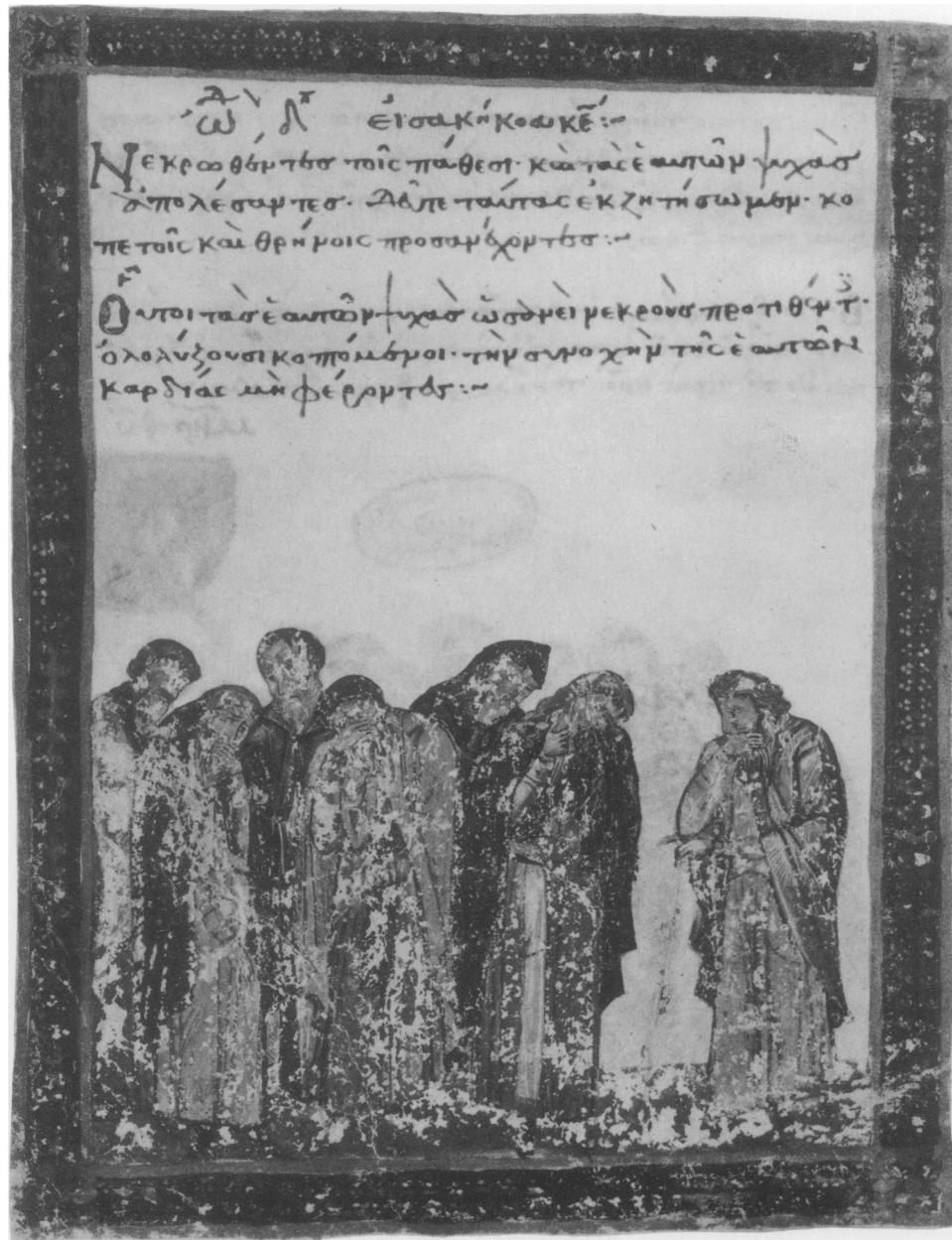
52.



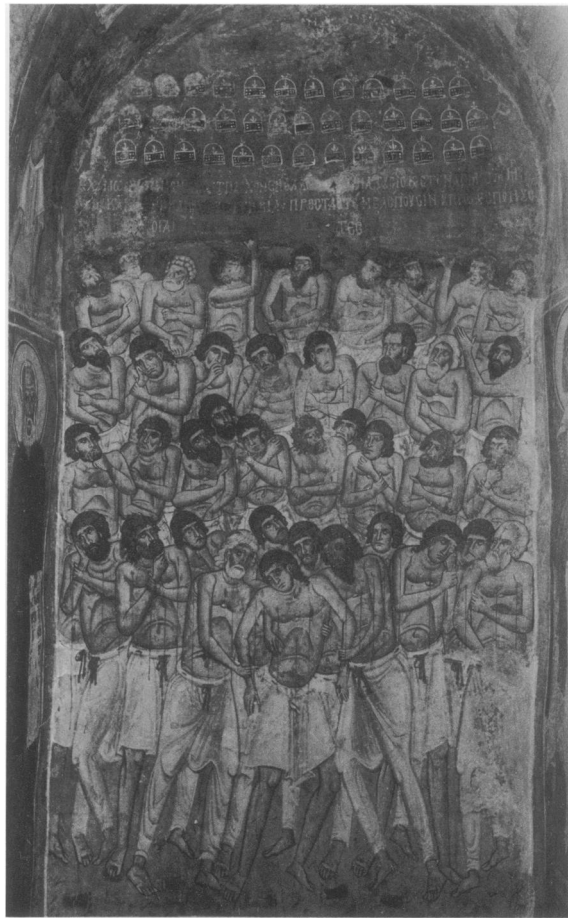
53. Stuttgart, Schlossmuseum. Ivory Casket, detail, The Ascension



54. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, theol. gr. 31, fol. 24v, The Death and Burial of Jacob



55. Bibl. Vat., gr. 1754, fol. 6v, Penitents



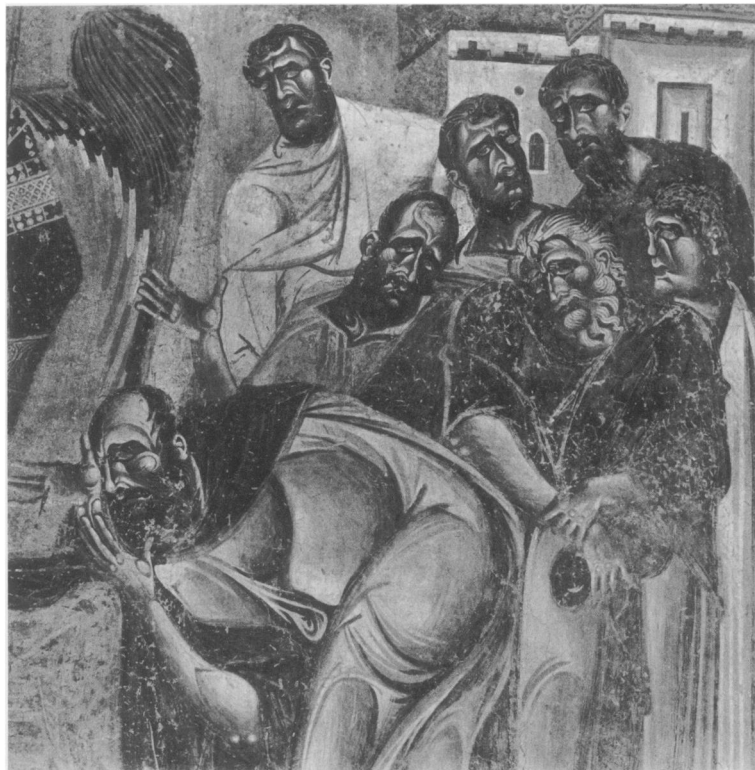
56. Asinou, Church of Our Lady. Fresco,
The Forty Martyrs



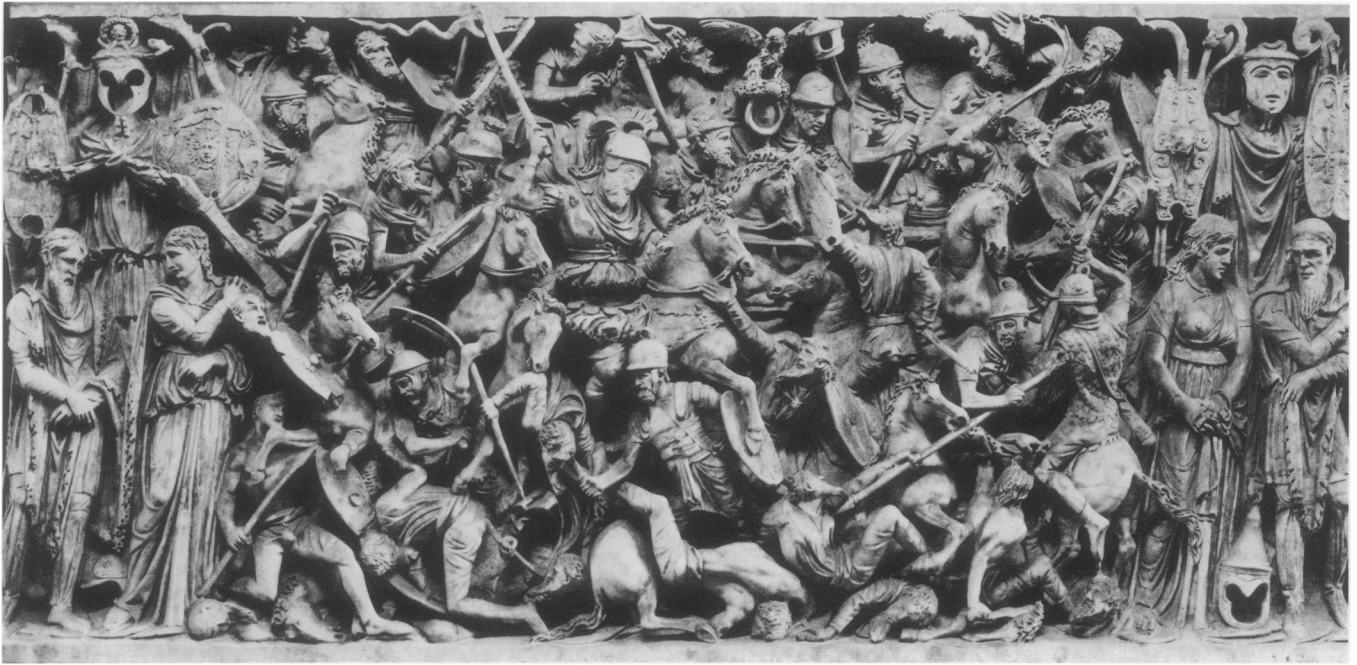
57. Bibl. Vat., gr. 749, fol. 29v, Friends of Job



58. Monza, Cathedral. Ampulla, The Crucifixion



59. Kurbinovo, St. George. Fresco, The *Koimesis*, detail



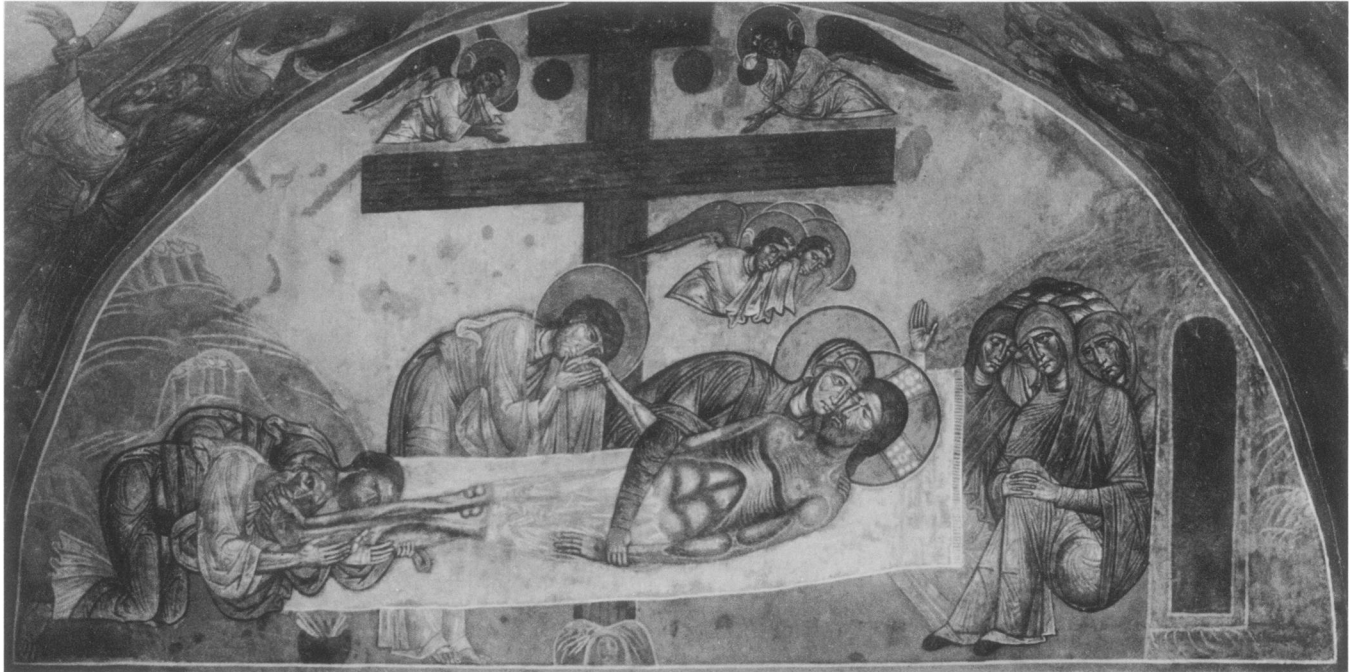
60. Rome, Museo Nazionale. Battle Sarcophagus



61. Rome, Museo Pio Cristiano.
Sarcophagus, detail,
Christ Crowned with Thorns



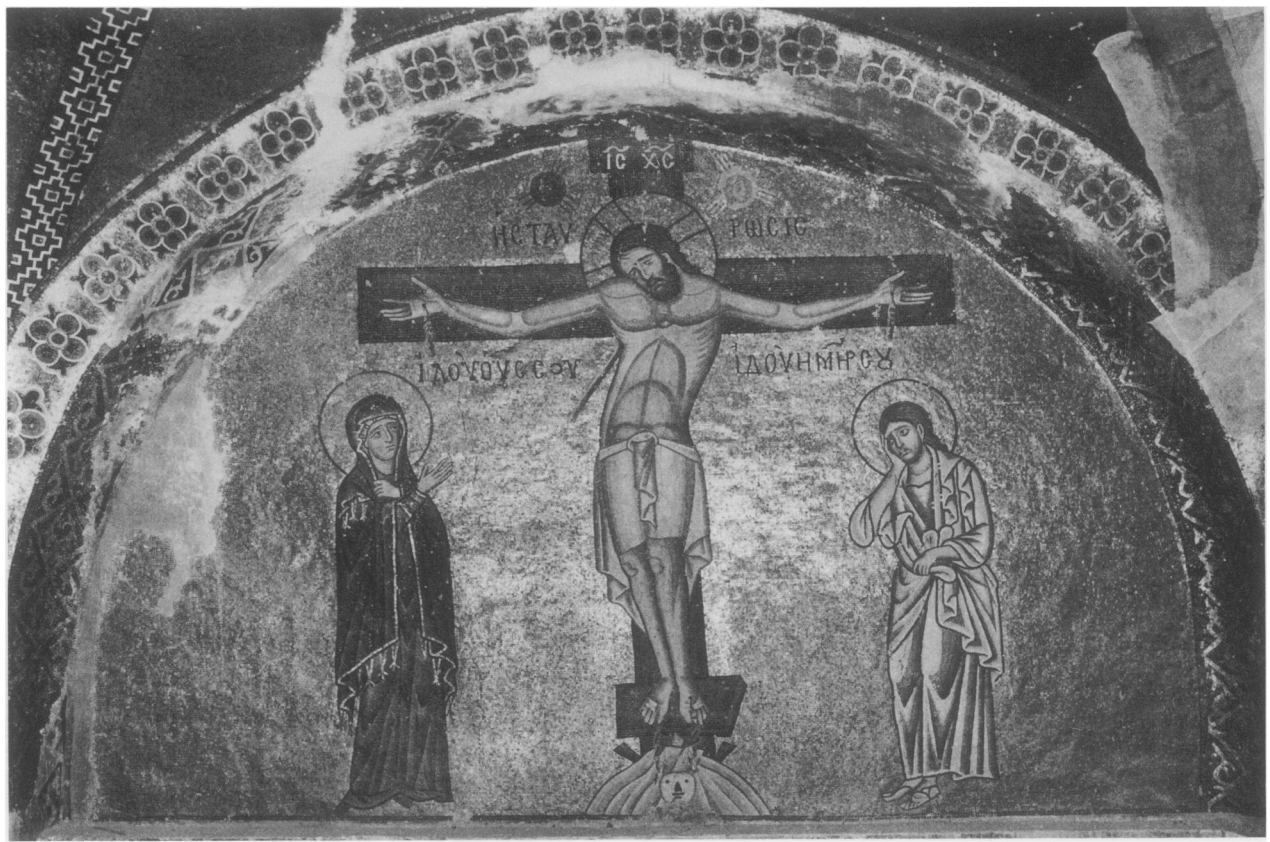
62. Florence, Bibl. Laur., MS VI.23, fol. 58r,
The Mocking of Christ



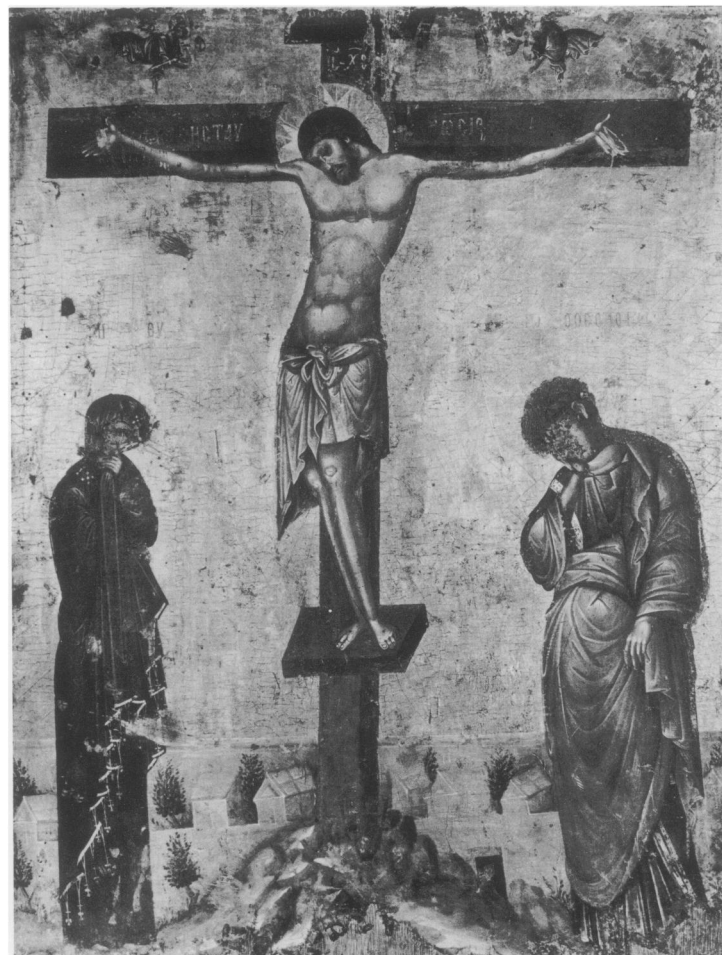
63. Pskov, Mirož Monastery. Fresco, The Lamentation



64. Toulouse, Musée des Augustins.
Sarcophagus, detail,
The Sacrifice of Isaac



65. Phocis, Hosios Lukas. Mosaic



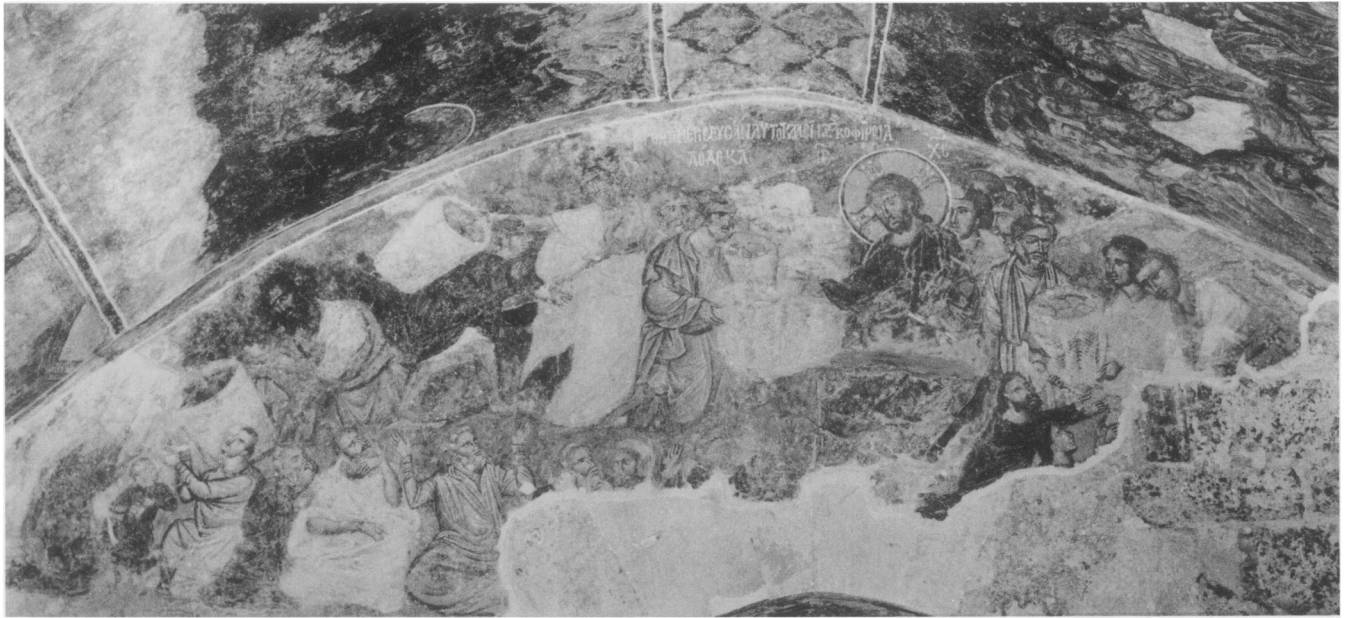
66. Athens, Byzantine Museum. Icon



67. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Red-Figured Bowl, The Ballot for the Arms of Achilles



68. Paris, Bibl. Nat., gr. 1208, fol. 173^v, The Annunciation



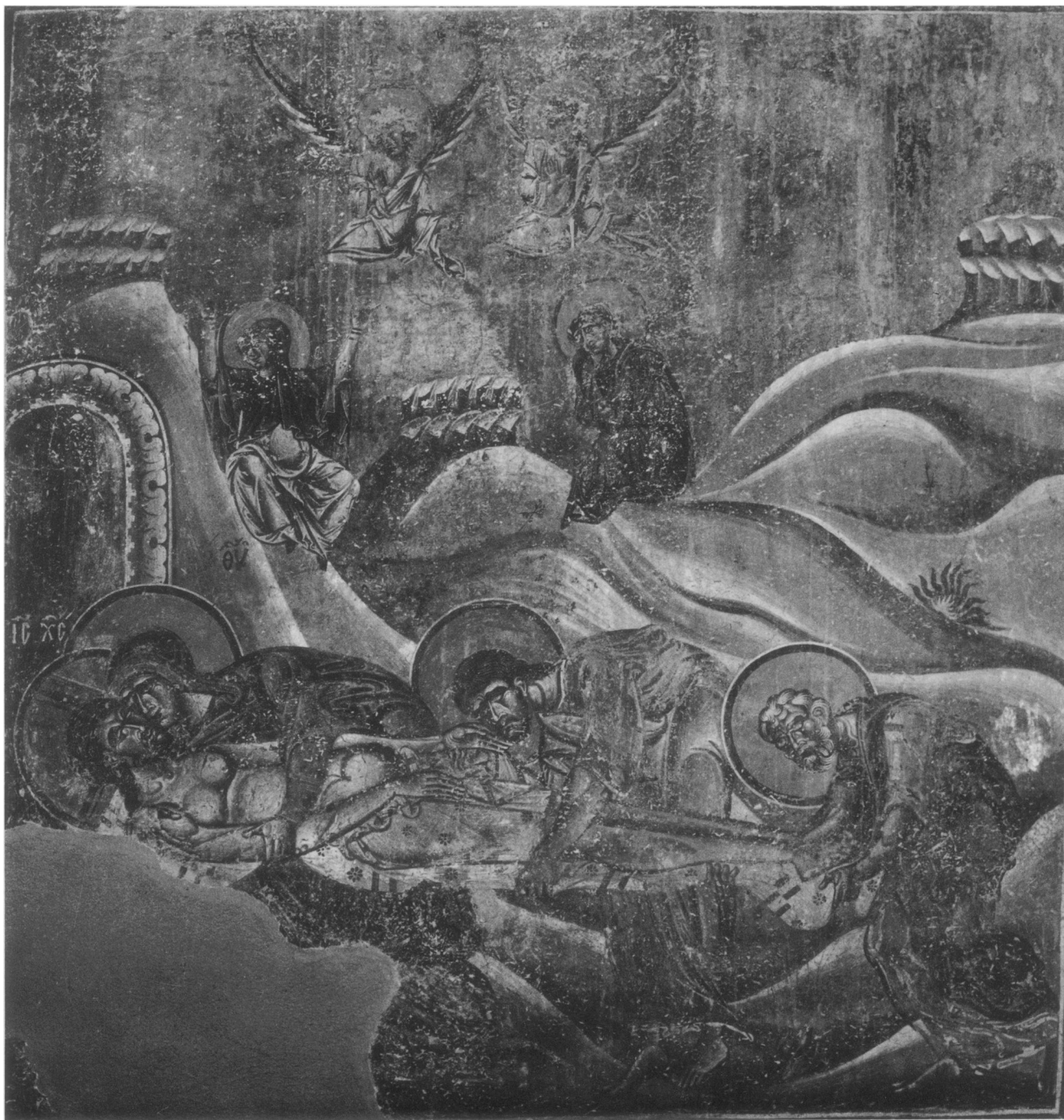
69. Trebizond, St. Sophia. Fresco, The Feeding of the Five Thousand



70. Sopoćani, Church of the Trinity. Fresco, The Death of Jacob



71. Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Ivory, detail, The Massacre of the Innocents



72. Kurbinovo, St. George. Fresco, The Lamentation



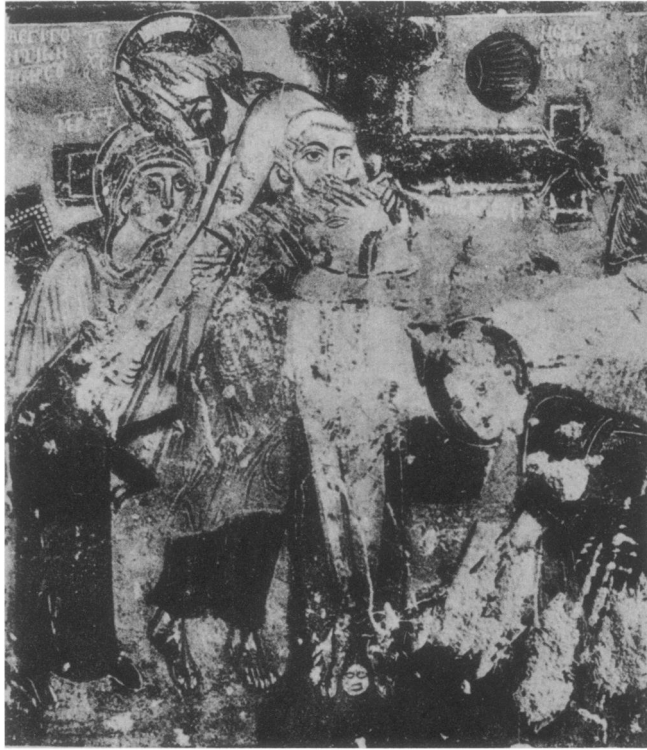
73. Kurbinovo, St. George. Fresco,
The Visitation



74. Ravenna. The Chair of Maximianus, detail, Joseph and Jacob
Reunited at Goshen



75. Bibl. Vat., gr. 746, fol. 139v, The Death of Jacob



76. Tokalı Kilise, Old Church. Fresco



77. New York, Morgan Library, MS 639, fol. 280^r

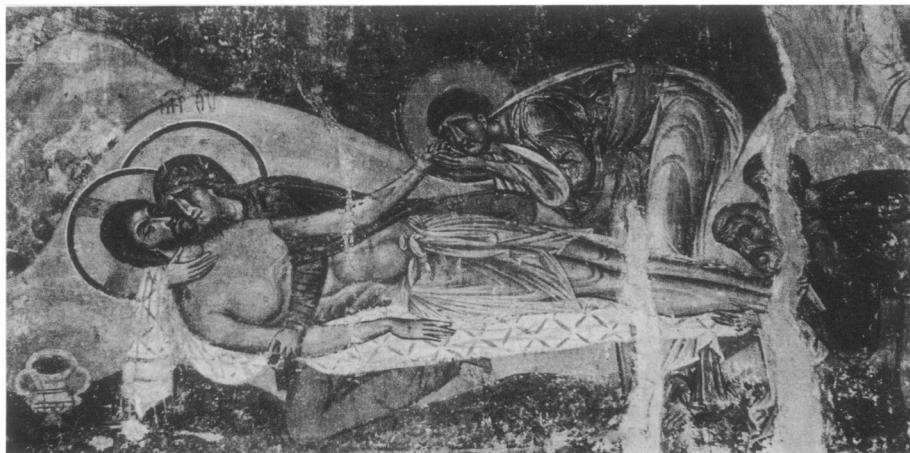
The Deposition



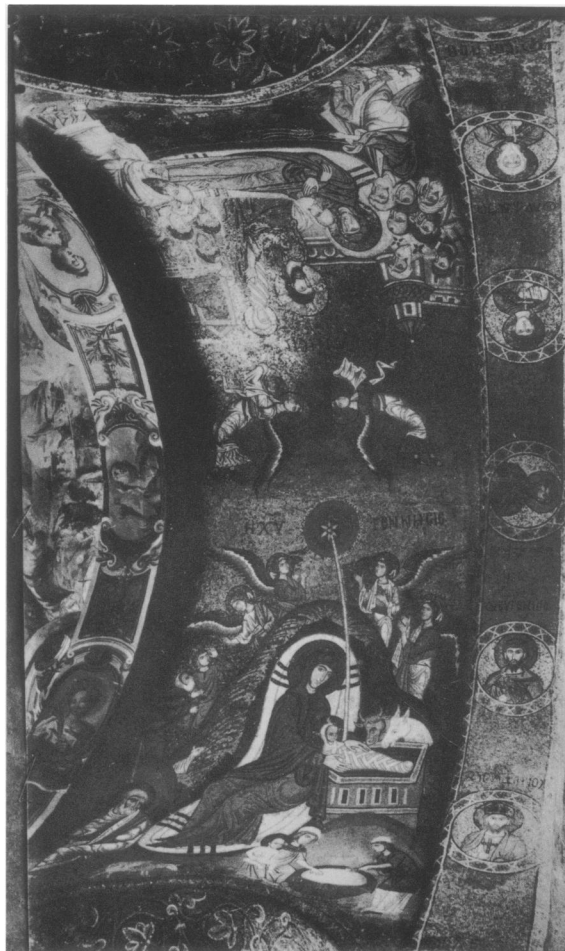
78. Nerezi, St. Pantaleimon. Fresco, The Deposition



79. Paris, Louvre. Ivory, detail, The Entombment



80. Nerezi, St. Pantaleimon. Fresco, The Lamentation



81. Palermo, Martorana. Mosaic, The Nativity and The *Koimesis*



82. Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Pergamon Altar, detail, Alcyoneus



83. Naples, Museo Nazionale. Fresco, Hercules Finding Telephos, detail



84. Florence, Bibl. Laur., Plut. I.56, fol. 4v, The Nativity



85. Bibl. Vat., gr. 1613, page 281,
The Massacre of the Innocents, detail



86. Bibl. Vat., gr. 1754, fol. 17r, Joyful Penitents

in an intimate embrace which effectively expressed the depth of her sorrow (figs. 72, 78). For the Byzantines, however, the gesture had a more than merely sentimental significance, for it could be a way of demonstrating the reality of Christ's incarnation.

In other contexts in Middle Byzantine art an embrace could dramatize joy or fear. Already in the Early Byzantine period the embrace of Mary and Elizabeth conveyed the joy of the Visitation,²¹² while in post-iconoclastic art it became a standard element in this scene. A spirited example is the late twelfth-century fresco at Kurbinovo, in which the women run together and hug each other with such impetuosity that their feet leave the ground, causing the pair to be suspended in midair in a flying greeting (fig. 73).²¹³

In Byzantine iconography, the embrace first expressed pathos in illustrations of the Old Testament, where the biblical text sometimes specifically calls for this gesture. One of the ivory panels on the sixth-century throne of Maximian shows Joseph and his old father hugging each other on being reunited at Goshen (fig. 74), in illustration of the Genesis text (46:30), which reads: "When they met he [Joseph] threw his arms round him and wept, and embraced him for a long time, weeping."²¹⁴ This scene was reproduced again on Byzantine ivories of the tenth and twelfth centuries.²¹⁵ The Bible also records that when Jacob had "...breathed his last....Then Joseph threw himself upon his father, weeping and kissing his face" (Gen. 50:1). The sixth-century miniaturist of the Vienna Genesis, folio 24^v, portrayed these actions literally (fig. 54), as did the later painters of the Octateuchs, such as the artist of a manuscript in the Vatican, gr. 746, folio 139^v (fig. 75).²¹⁶ In all these illuminations Joseph stands on the far side of the couch and clasps the upper part of his father's body in his arms, as he bends down to kiss Jacob on the face.

It was only in the Middle Byzantine period that the embrace helped to convey the grief of Christ's Passion. The gesture apparently entered the iconography of the Deposition and Entombment by the tenth century, partly because of a new climate of opinion which had arisen during the final victory over the Iconoclasts. Professor Martin has pointed out, in an article on the Dead Christ on the Cross, that this image corresponds with one of the chief arguments against Iconoclasm which was forcefully stated by the Patriarch

²¹² See Grabar, *Ampoules* (note 137 *supra*), pl. 47 (Bobbio, no. 18); R. Forrer, *Römische und byzantinische Seiden-textilien aus dem Gräber-felde von Achmim-Panopolis* (Strasbourg, 1891), pl. 14,5; A. F. Kendrick, *Victoria and Albert Museum. Catalogue of Textiles from Burying-Grounds in Egypt*, III (London, 1922), 57, no. 777, pl. 18. The embrace of the cousins was also observed by Choricus in the mosaic of St. Sergius at Gaza: *Laudatio Marciani*, I, 50.

²¹³ Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 103ff., fig. 42. At Kurbinovo an embrace also conveys the fear of the Maries at the empty tomb: *ibid.*, fig. 78.

²¹⁴ Natanson, *Ivories*, 31, fig. 42.

²¹⁵ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, I, no. 6A, pl. 2 (rosette casket at La Cava, Badia della S. Trinità), and no. 95, pl. 56 (casket in Berlin).

²¹⁶ Gerstinger, *Die Wiener Genesis* (note 24 *supra*), 116, pl. 20, fig. 108. See also Hesseling, *L'Octateuque grec de Smyrne* (note 149 *supra*), fig. 147, fol. 62^v; Ouspensky, *L'Octateuque de la bibliothèque du Sérail* (note 70 *supra*), figs. 86-87, fol. 153^v.

Nicephorus in the early ninth century.²¹⁷ According to the Patriarch's reasoning, the Iconoclasts were guilty of denying Christ's human nature, for if Christ could not be represented in images he would not be fully a man. In his arguments, Nicephorus repeatedly returns to the Crucifixion as proof of Christ's physical humanity, from which it followed that he could be portrayed in art.²¹⁸ The Lamentation, of course, was another image which emphasized Christ's physical death. This was clearly brought out in a sermon by George of Nicomedia, who wrote not long after the restoration of images and was a friend of the Orthodox Patriarch Photius. Through Mary's lament, the writer repeatedly made one point: although Christ is divine, his mother's gestures of affection show him also to be human: "Behold, [Lord,] your benign dispensation [of the incarnation] has taken its end. . . . For now you, the bestower of all breath, recline in bodily form, without breath. I am now holding and embracing the body without breath of the maker of the life of the universe, the controller of my own breath. . . . I am now kissing the motionless and wounded limbs of him who cures the incurable wounds of nature. . . . I am now embracing the voiceless mouth and silent lips of the maker of every natural power of speech. . . . I am kissing the closed eyes of him who invented the operation of sight."²¹⁹ In her speech Mary also recalls how she caressed Christ as a babe, likewise a demonstration of his human frailty: "I am now holding him without breath whom lately I took in my arms as my own dearest one."²²⁰ A highly embroidered treatment of the same theme, the link between Christ's birth and death, is found in the Lament of the Virgin written in the tenth century by Symeon Metaphrastes: "Nicodemus alone. . . placed you painfully in my arms, which even lately lifted you joyfully as an infant. . . . And once I took care of your swaddling-clothes, and now I am troubled with your funerary apparel. I washed you in lukewarm water, now I bathe you in hotter tears. I raised you in a mother's arms, but leaping and jumping as children do. Now I raise you up in the same arms, but without breath, and lying as the dead. Then I dipped my lips in your honey-sweet and dewy lips. . . . Many times you slept on my breast as an infant, and now you have fallen asleep

²¹⁷ Martin, "The Dead Christ on the Cross" (note 110 *supra*), 189ff., esp. 194. The earliest extant portrayal of the dead Christ on the cross now seems to be the eighth-century icon at Sinai, which can be connected with the arguments of Anastasios Sinaites against the Monophysites: H. Belting and C. Belting-Ihm, "Das Kreuzbild im 'Hodegos' des Anastasios Sinaites," *Tortulae. Studien zu alichristlichen und byzantinischen Monumenten*, ed. W. N. Schumacher (Rome, 1966), 30ff.

²¹⁸ See especially *Antirrheticus III adversus Constantinum Copronymum*, PG, 100, cols. 425C, 428A, 432B-C.

²¹⁹ Ἰδοὺ τὰ τῆς φιλαγάθου σου πέρας ἀπειλήφεν οἰκονομία. . . . Ἀπνους γὰρ νῦν σωματικῶς, ὁ πάσης πνοῆς χορηγὸς ἀνακλίνῃ. Ἀπνουν κατέχω καὶ περιπτύσσομαι σῶμα τοῦ τῆς ζωῆς τῶν ὅλων δημιουργοῦ τοῦ τὴν ἐμὴν περικρατοῦντος πνοήν. . . . Ἀκίνητα νῦν καὶ τετραυματισμένα καταφιλῶ μέλη, τοῦ τὰ ἀνιάτρευτα τῆς φύσεως ἐξιωμένου τραύματα. . . . Ἀφωνον νῦν στόμα καὶ χεῖλη ἐφησυχάζοντα περιπτύσσομαι, τοῦ πᾶσαν λογικὴν δημιουργήσαντος φύσιν. . . . Μύοντας ὀφθαλμοὺς κατασπάζομαι, τοῦ τὴν ὀπτικήν ἐνέργειαν ἐπινοήσαντος. *Oratio VIII*, PG, 100, col. 1488A-B; Millet, *Recherches*, 490. Here οἰκονομία (dispensation) is used with reference to the Incarnation. See A. Heisenberg, *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche*, II (Leipzig, 1908), 47 note 1; Theodore, *Dialogus* II, PG, 83, col. 129C, τὴν ἐνανθρώπησιν δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου καλοῦμεν οἰκονομίαν.

²²⁰ Ἀπνουν νῦν κατέχω, ὃν πρόην ὡς οἰκεῖον ἐνηγκαλιζόμεν φίλτατον. *Loc. cit.*

there as a dead man."²²¹ In this passage, too, the juxtaposition of maternal embraces at infancy and at burial stresses the humanity of Christ.

The intimate embraces described by George of Nicomedia were not immediately accepted into the iconography of Christ's burial in art. The ninth-century Chludov and Pantocrator Psalters each have two separate miniatures, one with Joseph and Nicodemus alone carrying Christ into the Sepulcher and the other with the women sitting passively in mourning beside the closed tomb.²²² In the late ninth-century Paris Gregory, folio 30^v, Mary appears as a weeping bystander while Joseph and Nicodemus take Christ down from the cross, but she does not hold the body (fig. 37).²²³ However, by the tenth century, Byzantine artists had introduced the embrace into both the Deposition and the Entombment. At first they employed the motif tentatively, but by the twelfth century they exploited it for its full emotive effect. Among the Deposition scenes, one of the earliest surviving examples is the fresco in the Old Church at Tokalı in Cappadocia, which dates to the first half of the tenth century (fig. 76).²²⁴ In this painting Mary helps Joseph take the body down from the cross and embraces both arms of Christ, whose head slumps down to rest on top of her own. The painting could be a direct illustration of George of Nicomedia's description of the Deposition from the sermon quoted above: "Thus she took the drawn nails into her bosom, and clasping the freed limbs, she kissed them. And taking the limbs on her arms she wished by herself to perform the deposition from the cross."²²⁵ The Virgin also assists directly in the deposition in the ivory carving of the Provinzialmuseum at Hannover.²²⁶ Here she holds the upper part of Christ's torso in her arms and rests her face against the top of his head. A miniature of the second half of the eleventh century in a lectionary in the Morgan Library, MS 639, folio 280^r, shows Mary holding up her son's body in a similar position, except that here she places her head in the angle between his shoulder and his neck (fig. 77).²²⁷ In twelfth- and thirteenth-century Deposition scenes we find the Virgin embracing her son in such a way that their cheeks are pressed together. The earliest

²²¹ Μόνος Νικόδημος. . . ἐμαῖς ἀγκάλαις ἐπωδύνως ἐντέθεικεν, αἱ σε καὶ πρῶν ὄντα βρέφος χαρμοσύνως ἐβράστασαν. . . . Καὶ πάλαι σε ἀμφὶ τὰ βρεφικά διακονήσασα σπάργανα, καὶ περὶ τὰ νεκρικά σου τυρβάλομαι. Χλιαροῖς ἐλουσάμην σε νάμασιν, καὶ θερμοτέροις ἄρτι καταντλῶ σε τοῖς δάκρυσιν. Ὡλέναις μητρικαῖς ἐνεκούφιζον, ἀλλὰ σκιρτῶντα καὶ κατὰ νηπίους ἀλλόμενον. Ἀνακουφίζω σε καὶ νῦν ταῖς αὐταῖς, ἀλλ' ἄπνουν, καὶ κατὰ νεκροῦς ἀνακείμενον. Ἐνέβαπτόν μου τότε τὰ χεῖλη τοῖς μελιχροῖς σου καὶ δροσώδεσί σου χεῖλεσι. . . . Βρεφοπρεπῶς μοι πολλάκις ἐν τοῖς στέρνοις ἀφύπνωσας, καὶ νῦν νεκροπρεπῶς ἐν τούτοις κεκοίμησαι. *Oratio in lugubrem lamentationem sanctissimae Deiparae pretiosum corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi amplexantis*, PG, 114, col. 216B-C; Millet, *Recherches*, 490.

²²² See *supra*, notes 52 and 118.

²²³ Weitzmann, "Threnos" (note 5 *supra*), 479f., fig. 4.

²²⁴ Millet, *Recherches*, 474, fig. 497.

²²⁵ Οὕτω τοὺς μὲν ἀνελκομένους ἡλούς κόλποις ὑπέδεχeto, τὰ δὲ ἀπολούμενα μέλη περιπτυσσομένη κατεφίλει· καὶ ἀγκάλαις ἐπιτιθεῖσα, μόνη τῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ καταβάσει διακονεῖν προεθυμείτο. *Oratio VIII*, PG, 100, col. 1488A; Millet, *Recherches*, 467.

²²⁶ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, no. 40, pl. 17. A very similar composition was found in the New Church at Tokalı Kilise, which can be dated between ca. 920 and 969: Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres* (note 114 *supra*), I, pt. 2, p. 348, pl. 85.3. On the date, see R. Cormack, "Byzantine Cappadocia: The Archaic Group of Wall-Paintings," *JBA*, 30 (1967), 24.

²²⁷ K. Weitzmann, "The Constantinopolitan Lectionary Morgan 639," *Studies in Art and Literature for Belle da Costa Greene*, ed. D. Miner (Princeton, 1954), 358ff., fig. 318.

securely dated example is the fresco of 1164 at Nerezi (fig. 78).²²⁸ In this painting Mary helps support Christ's body with her right arm, and putting her left arm around his neck, draws his face to her own.

The embrace was to become an even more prominent element in the iconography of the Entombment and Lamentation, where, too, the motif was probably introduced by the tenth century. This can be deduced from a Western ivory book cover, now in the Louvre, which was produced by the Metz school around the year 1000.²²⁹ The ivory incorporates a strip of three scenes, the Deposition, the Entombment, and the Women at the Tomb, which, as Weitzmann has shown, derive from a Middle Byzantine model.²³⁰ In the Entombment, Joseph and Nicodemus carry Christ feet first into the Sepulcher while Mary follows, holding Christ's body in such a way that their heads are drawn close together (fig. 79). This last motif echoes the entombment of Rachel in the Vienna Genesis (fig. 5). The embrace of mother and son receives more emphasis in the Lamentation scenes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as the famous wall painting of 1164 at Nerezi and the somewhat later version at Kurbinovo, in which the Virgin kneels or crouches nearest the tomb, clasping Christ's head and shoulders in her arms and pressing her cheek against his (figs. 72, 80). St. John holds and sometimes kisses Christ's left hand, while Joseph and Nicodemus move to the subordinate role of carrying the feet.²³¹ At Nerezi, as in some other portrayals of the scene, the body appears stretched out horizontally with a cloth suspended underneath it, as if both body and cloth were resting on an invisible couch (fig. 80).²³² Weitzmann has shown that this arrangement, as well as certain other features of the scene, suggest that the *Koimesis* could have served as a model.²³³ It is also possible that the odd suspension of Christ's body, and in particular the Virgin's position in relation to Christ as she leans down to kiss him, could have been derived from the miniatures of Joseph embracing his father Jacob on his deathbed in the Vienna Genesis and the Octateuchs (figs. 54, 75), a source suggested by Velmans.²³⁴ It is not unlikely that the Old Testament illustration, which has a textual basis in the Bible, had some influence on the creation of the Lamentation.

We have seen that the post-iconoclastic writers linked the embraces of mother and Child at birth and death as common indicators of Christ's humanity. From the tenth century onward, Byzantine Nativity scenes began with increasing frequency to show Mary turning toward her infant to hold him as

²²⁸ Hamann-Mac Lean and Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei* (note 39 *supra*), 17f., fig. 38. See also the frescoes in the crypt of Aquileia Cathedral (L. Magnani, *Gli affreschi della Basilica di Aquileia* [Turin, 1960], pl. 3) and at Milesevo (Hamann-Mac Lean and Hallensleben, *op. cit.*, 22f., fig. 85).

²²⁹ A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der Karolingischen und Sächsischen Kaiser*, I (Berlin, 1914), no. 80, pl. 33.

²³⁰ Weitzmann, "Threnos" (note 5 *supra*), 482f., fig. 9. On the development of the Entombment and the *Threnos*, see also M. Soteriou, in *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.*, Ser. 4,7 (1973-74), 139-48.

²³¹ Weitzmann, "Threnos," 483ff., fig. 10ff.

²³² Hamann-Mac Lean and Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei*, 17f., fig. 39.

²³³ "Threnos," 484f.

²³⁴ Velmans, "Les valeurs affectives" (note 5 *supra*), 49.

he lay in his crib. In the well-known mosaic at Hosios Lukas, for example, the Virgin places her left hand on the Child's shoulder and her other hand under his head, while she nods gently toward her baby (fig. 28).²³⁵ This gesture was very rare in pre-iconoclastic illustrations of the Birth of Christ, and, like the embrace which Mary gives her son at his death, it is to be read as evidence of Christ's mortal nature. Millet interpreted Mary's gesture as part of her preparations to receive the Magi. He saw her as lifting the Child out of the manger so that she could hold him on her lap for the adoration of the three kings, who are seen approaching on the left.²³⁶ However, it can be shown that for the Byzantine observer Mary's action also had a deeper significance. In the twelfth-century mosaic in the Martorana at Palermo, Mary is shown clasping her Child, as at Hosios Lukas, but the approaching Magi are nowhere to be seen. Instead, on the facing side of the same barrel vault, there is a mosaic of the *Koimesis* (fig. 81).²³⁷ Two texts help to explain this pairing of scenes and, at the same time, the meaning of the Virgin's gesture. In a sermon on the Assumption, Leo VI declares of Mary: "Because you held God when he was invested with flesh, you are held in the hands of God when you are divested of flesh."²³⁸ And a poet of the tenth century, John Kyriotes, writes: "Formerly, Virgin, you embraced me in your arms; I sucked the mother's milk from your breast. Now I myself, having embraced your spirit, send your body to the place of delight."²³⁹ Thus, in the Nativity the holding of the Christ Child is a reference to his incarnation. To stress this point, the artist at the Martorana made the very confrontation which had been proposed by Leo VI and John Kyriotes. In the mosaic Mary holds her Child as he lies in his crib, just as Christ carries his mother's soul, which is tightly bound like a baby. The two events are attended by juxtaposed pairs of angels. Thus, the image makes a play of mortal body and immortal soul, a visual pun. The same confrontation of gestures at the Nativity and at the *Koimesis* was made by Middle Byzantine wall painters and ivory carvers.²⁴⁰ In a similar manner, Byzantine artists linked together images of Christ's Nativity and his Passion. In the late twelfth-century paintings of the church of the Hagioi

²³⁵ See also the tenth-century ivory in Quedlinburg: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, no. 25, pl. 8.

²³⁶ *Recherches*, 146ff.

²³⁷ Demus, *Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (note 69 *supra*), 80f., figs. 55, 56.

²³⁸ "Ὅτι ἐβάστασας Θεὸν σάρκα ἡμφιεσμένον, βαστάζῃ Θεοῦ παλάμαις ἀπαμφιασμένη τὴν σάρκα. *Oratio* XIV, *In Beatae Mariae assumptionem*, PG, 107, col. 164A.

²³⁹ Σαῖς ἡγκαλίζου πρὶν με χερσί, Παρθένε,
 Σηλῆς δὲ σῆς ἔσπασα μητρικὸν γάλα.
 Τὸ πνεῦμά σου νῦν αὐτὸς ἡγκαλισμένος,
 τὸ σῶμα πέμπω πρὸς τρυφῆς τὸ χωρίον.

PG, 106, col. 907.

²⁴⁰ For example, in Saklı Kilise at Göreme the Nativity fresco, with Mary holding her child, was placed next to the *Koimesis* (respectively at the west end of the south wall, and the south end of the west wall); Restle, *Wall Painting* (note 34 *supra*), II, figs. 26, 27. See also the evident juxtaposition of the *Koimesis* and the *Hodegetria* on two Byzantine ivory triptychs, now incorporated into an eleventh-century portable altar in the treasury of the Liebfrauenkirche at Trier. The *Hodegetria* is even flanked by flying angels similar to those which on the *Koimesis* plaque wait to receive the soul: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, 58f., no. 116, pl. 43.

Anargyroi at Kastoria, the Lamentation is prominently placed in the center of the north wall of the nave directly opposite the Birth of Christ in the center of the south wall. In the Nativity scene Mary puts out her right hand as if to hold the Child, anticipating her embrace in the Lamentation, while the traditional motif of the Child's first bath recalls the rhetorical conceit of Symeon Metaphrastes: "I washed you in lukewarm water, now I bathe you in hotter tears."^{240a}

In the iconography of Christ's birth and death, therefore, the image of Mary holding her son had both a sentimental and a doctrinal value. The embrace is the gesture which, more than any other, reveals the theological basis for the depiction of emotion in Byzantine Church art.

9. *Facial Expression*

The preceding pages have stressed the importance of bodily gestures for the portrayal of emotion in both classical and Byzantine art. In this last section I shall consider the extent to which Byzantine artists were able to convey feeling by means of facial expression. In the introduction to his *Imagines*, the classical critic Philostratus the Younger explained how the painter should be able to read the features of the face, so as "...to discern the signs of people's dispositions, even when they are silent, and what is revealed in the condition of the cheeks, in the expression of the eyes, in the disposition of the eyebrows, and, in short, whatever concerns the mind." Thus the painter should be able to characterize a man who is "...mad, or angry, or thoughtful, or glad, or impetuous, or in love, and, in a word, will paint for each the appropriate characteristics."²⁴¹ This passage reflects the achievements of Hellenistic artists, who were able to convey a full range of emotions through facial expression, from the agony of Laocoön to the laughter of small children. The classical *ekphraseis* abounded with references to the depiction of emotion on the face, and they were no less frequent in Byzantine descriptions of works of art. Medieval writers continued to use the classical *topoi*, particularly that which described the mingling of contrary feelings on one countenance.²⁴² In the Byzantine *ekphraseis* we find described the full range of emotions that we associate with Hellenistic art. In the sixth century Choricus, in his *ekphrasis* on the mosaics in the church of St. Sergius at

^{240a} S. Pelekanidis, *Καστορία, Ι, Βυζαντινὰ τοιχογραφία* (Salonika, 1953), pls. 15b, 17b; on the date of the paintings, see Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 563ff. The juxtapositions made by Symeon Metaphrastes (see *supra*, note 221) suggest that those icons of the *Eleousa* in which the Virgin tenderly holds her child and touches her cheek against his may have expressed an ambivalence between joy at the birth of her son and sadness foreshadowing her last embraces after his death. In either case, the sentiment in the image would strengthen the Virgin's role as intercessor on behalf of humanity: see A. Grabar, "L'Hodigitria et l'Eléousa," *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti*, 10 (1974), 3ff., esp. 10.

²⁴¹ "...χρή γὰρ τὸν ὁρθῶς προστατεύοντα τῆς τέχνης φύσιν τε ἀνθρωπεῖαν εὖ διεσκεῖσθαι καὶ ἱκανὸν εἶναι γνωματεύσαι ἡθῶν σύμβολα καὶ σιωπώντων καὶ τί μὲν ἐν παρειῶν καταστάσει, τί δὲ ἐν ὀφθαλμῶν κράσει, τί δὲ ἐν ὀφρύων ἡθῇ κείται καὶ συνελόντι εἰπεῖν, ὅποσα ἐς γνώμην τείναι. Τούτων δὲ ἱκανῶς ἔχων συναιρήσει πάντα καὶ ἄριστα ὑποκρινεῖται ἢ χεῖρ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἐκάστου δράμα, μεμνηνὸτα εἰ τύχοι ἢ ὀργιζόμενον ἢ ἐννοῦν ἢ χαίροντα ἢ ὀρμητὴν ἢ ἐρώντα καὶ καθάπαξ τὸ ἀρμόδιον ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ γράγει. *Imagines*, prooemium, 3.

²⁴² For a discussion of this *topos*, see Maguire, "Truth and Convention" (note 2 *supra*), 132ff.

Gaza, tells us of the sorrow of the centurion whose servant has fallen ill: "But who is this man with a sad countenance? What suffering brings him in supplication?"²⁴³ While in the mosaic of the Miracle at the Marriage of Cana, Choricus finds the expression of good humor: "It seems that the wine has a very fine bouquet. The man who has just drunk proves his pleasure by the redness of his face."²⁴⁴ Twelfth-century art critics also visualized the expression of a wide variety of feelings by means of facial features. Mesarites, in a passage quoted above, vividly depicted Mary's look of suffering in the mosaic of the Raising of Lazarus in the Holy Apostles.²⁴⁵ Elsewhere he described the frightened appearance of the Maries when confronted by the angel at the opened tomb: "...a great pallor descended on the aspect of their faces, the redness of their blood having run away to the heart..."²⁴⁶ Another twelfth-century writer, John Phocas, was able to see joy in the features of the Virgin in a mosaic of the Nativity at Bethlehem. He observed that the mother was "...looking toward the Babe, and displaying her inner discretion in her smiling form, and in the color in her cheeks."²⁴⁷

These statements in the *ekphrasis* may cause us to wonder how far they reflected the true abilities of Byzantine artists to portray differing emotions on the face. David Winfield has studied this problem, showing that in Middle Byzantine wall paintings artists were able to produce only two generalized effects, one of tranquility and the other of emotional disturbance.²⁴⁸ Here I shall try to demonstrate, first, that Winfield's observations hold true for other media besides wall painting, and second, that Middle Byzantine artists owed much of their limited skill in depicting facial expressions to the lingering traditions of classical art. The *topoi* which survived in literature were, to a lesser extent, accompanied by the continuation of appropriate formulae in art.

An examination of the famous portrayals of suffering in Hellenistic sculpture clearly shows the classical origins of many of the devices later used, in a less subtle and more schematic fashion, by Byzantine painters. Taking a famous example, we may distinguish some of these techniques on the head of Alcyoneus from the Pergamene altar (fig. 82). The curves of the eyebrows are distorted and drawn up into an inverted V, and the forehead is deeply lined.²⁴⁹ In addition, the victim opens his mouth, as if imploring for release from his

²⁴³ Ἀλλὰ τίς ὁ σκυθρωπὸς οὗτος; τί δὲ πεπονθὼς ἰκετεύει; *Laudatio Marciani*, I, 61.

²⁴⁴ ἔοικε δὲ λίαν ἀνθοσμίας ὑπάρχειν· ὁ γὰρ ἔρτι πίων ἐλέγχει τὴν ἡδονὴν τῷ τῆς ὀψεως ἐρυθμήματι. *Ibid.*, I, 58. See also Procopius, *De aedificiis*, I, 10, 17–19, where we read of a smiling Roman Senate in a mosaic of Justinian's triumph over the Vandals and the Goths.

²⁴⁵ See *supra*, note 103.

²⁴⁶ ... ὥχρα τε πολλή περὶ τὴν τῶν προσώπων ἐπεκάθισεν ἐπιφάνειαν, τῆς αἱματηρᾶς ἐρυθρότητος περὶ τὴν πρωτοπαθοῦσαν ἀποδραμούσης καρδίαν. . . . Ed. Downey (note 55 *supra*), XXVIII, 16.

²⁴⁷ ... καὶ πρὸς βρέφος ὀρῶσα, καὶ τὴν ἐντὸς σωφροσύνην ἐν τῷ τοῦ σχήματος μειδιᾷματι, καὶ τῇ τῶν παρειῶν εὐχροίᾳ ἐμφαίνουσα. *Descriptio terrae sanctae*, PG, 133, col. 957D. This is one of the few observations in his *ekphrasis* that John Phocas did not copy verbatim from Choricus, *Laudatio Marciani*, I, 51 ff.; Maguire, *op. cit.*, 116. Mesarites had a very different perception of the Nativity mosaic in the Holy Apostles, for he said that the Virgin's face showed pain: ed. Downey, XXIII, 1. See Kitzinger, "Hellenistic Heritage" (note 3 *supra*), 104.

²⁴⁸ "Middle and Later Byzantine Wall Painting Methods," *DOP*, 22 (1968), 61 ff., esp. 128.

²⁴⁹ Bieber, *Sculpture* (note 60 *supra*), 113 ff., fig. 462.

captor. The same features are found on the Laocoön sculpture in the Vatican.²⁵⁰ Ancient writers often referred to these facial characteristics as indicators of emotion, particularly of suffering. For example, the second-century novelist Achilles Tatius, in an *ekphrasis* on a painting by the artist Euanthes, gives the following description of the bound Prometheus: "Yet other features show his suffering. His eyebrows are bent, his lips are contracted, he shows his teeth. You have pity as if the painting itself were in pain."²⁵¹

Roman frescoes provide us with further illustrations of these classical techniques for conveying facial expressions. In Pompeian paintings the most frequent indicator of sorrow is the contraction of the brows. Two striking examples are the paintings of Iphigeneia carried to her sacrifice from the Casa del Poeta Tragico, and of Dirce trampled under the bull from the Casa dei Vettii.²⁵² Occasionally in Roman painting we find mourners with their eyes entirely closed from weeping. In a fresco from the Casa del Sacerdos Amandus at Pompeii the third of three Hesperides shuts her eyes, holding her garment over her face and turning her head away from Hercules as he leaves with his prize.²⁵³ But figures with their eyes closed from grief were rare in classical art, just as they were in the Byzantine period.

The Campanian painters could also portray laughing figures, such as the young Pan in the fresco of Hercules finding Telephos from the Basilica at Herculaneum (fig. 83).²⁵⁴ Here the opened lips, the upturned sides of the mouth, the rounded cheeks, and the half-closed eyes all contribute to the effect of gaiety. This was an aspect of classical art which did not continue into the Byzantine tradition.

The classical techniques for the depiction of sorrow, however, survived in Early Christian and Early Byzantine art. Our best examples from this period are in small-scale works of art, in miniatures and ivories. In spite of the physical limitations imposed by these media, Early Christian artists managed to convey a surprising degree of emotional intensity through facial expression. This is demonstrated by the two early fifth-century ivory plaques from a diptych, now in Paris and Berlin. In the panel of the Massacre of the Innocents the mother's eyebrows contract and their mouths open wide in lamentation (fig. 71). A similar expression characterizes the lunatic in the panel showing the Miracle of the Gadarene Swine.²⁵⁵

Manuscript painters also exploited these classical devices for showing sorrow. Some of the most striking illustrations occur in the sixth-century miniatures of the Vienna Genesis. In the deathbed scenes the faces of the mourners assume a mask-like appearance, with chalky complexions contrasting with

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 134f., fig. 531.

²⁵¹ τὸ δ' ἄλλο σχῆμα δείκνυσιν τὸν πόνον. Κεκύρτωται τὰς ὀφρῦς, συνέσταλται τὸ χεῖλος, φαίνει τοὺς ὀδόντας. Ἡλέησας ἂν ὥς ἀλοῦσαν τὴν γραφὴν. *Leucippe and Clitophon*, III, 8.

²⁵² P. Herrmann, *Denkmäler der Malerei des Altertums*, I (Munich, 1904), pls. 15, 43.

²⁵³ A. Maiuri, *Monumenti della pittura antica scoperti in Italia, sezione terza, Pompei*, fasc. II (Rome, 1938), 7, pl. A.

²⁵⁴ M. M. Gabriel, *Masters of Campanian Painting* (New York, 1952), 27ff., fig. 2.

²⁵⁵ Natanson, *Ivories*, fig. 12; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 81, no. 113.

black rimmed eyes and accentuating the sharp angle of the brows (figs. 5, 54). In the miniature of the death of Deborah one of the mourners closes her eyes like the weeping Hesperid in the Pompeian fresco. In the depictions of the death and burial of Jacob some of the weepers have their cheeks disfigured by dark streaks, especially noticeable on Joseph in the burial scene, which became a frequent sign of grief in Middle Byzantine art (fig. 54). Sixth-century miniaturists also conveyed grief through facial expression in New Testament scenes. In the Crucifixion painting of the Rabbula Gospels the artist clearly showed the narrowing of Mary's eyes from weeping (fig. 36). The distortion of Mary's face through sorrow is evident if one contrasts the miniature of the Crucifixion with those of the Ascension and the Nativity, in which her features are more rounded and regular (fig. 84).²⁵⁶

In the Middle Byzantine period the expansion of the Passion cycle gave artists new opportunities to portray sorrow, which had not existed in pre-iconoclastic art. We find that there was a continuing interest in the manipulation of the eyebrow line as an indication of grief. In addition, Middle Byzantine artists portrayed weeping by means of streaks of shadow on the cheeks, and occasionally by closed eyes. However, post-iconoclastic artists rarely showed the actors in Biblical scenes opening their mouths; generally they only depicted penitents and the inmates of Hell voicing their pain in this manner.²⁵⁷ As we have seen, in Middle Byzantine art sufferers usually stifle their cries with their hands.

In the ninth-century miniatures of the Paris Gregory there is a clear differentiation in the drawing of faces between sorrow and tranquility. This can be demonstrated by comparing the features of Mary in the Visitation on folio 3^r (fig. 9) and in the Crucifixion on folio 30^v (fig. 37). In the former scene her eyebrows form gentle curves, whereas in the latter they slope together in a shallow inverted "V." Similar distortions of the eyebrow line convey the remorse of the officials of Nineveh on folio 3^r (fig. 9), and of Adam expelled from Paradise on folio 52^v (fig. 13). A later imperial manuscript, the *Menologium* of Basil II, which probably dates to the beginning of the eleventh century, provides more emphatic contrasts between expressions of calm and of pain. In the miniature of the Nativity the illuminator Symeon of Blachernae gave the Virgin's face even outlines and a bland complexion (fig. 27); but in the Massacre of the Innocents the artist Pantoleon portrayed a bereaved mother with strongly distorted brows (fig. 85). In addition, he painted narrow

²⁵⁶ Cecchelli *et al.*, *The Rabbula Gospels* (note 108 *supra*), folios 13^r, 13^v, 4^v. Early Christian mosaicists, no less than miniaturists, could vividly portray suffering, particularly through the contraction of the brows. See, for example, L. Budde, *Antike Mosaiken in Kilikien. I, Frühchristliche Mosaiken in Misis-Mopsuestia* (Recklinghausen, 1969), figs. 155, 157 (Samson pulls down the temple on the Philistines); K. Weitzmann, "The Classical in Byzantine Art as a Mode of Individual Expression," *Byzantine Art and European Art* (Athens, 1966), 172, fig. 132; repr. in *idem*, *Studies*, ed. Kessler (note 69 *supra*), 172, fig. 153 (medallion bust of John the Baptist at Sinai).

²⁵⁷ Among the few examples are an illustration of penitent monks in the manuscript of the *Heavenly Ladder* in the Vatican, gr. 394, fol. 42^v (Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, 61, fig. 85), and the fresco of the Last Judgment in the Panagia Mavriotissa at Castoria (N. K. Moutsopoulos, *The Monastery of the Virgin Mary Mavriotissa at Castoria* [Athens, 1967], pl. 48).

streaks descending from the corners of her eyes and disfiguring her cheeks, a device which we have observed in the Vienna Genesis.²⁵⁸

In the course of the twelfth century these techniques of facial expression tended to be exaggerated further by Byzantine artists, though they were not essentially changed. A similar elaboration affected drapery patterns at this time. The results of this development can be seen, for example, in the early thirteenth-century miniature of the Maries by the tomb in the Gospels in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, gr. qu. 66, folio 96^r (fig. 19). Instead of the narrow lines on the cheeks which expressed weeping in the miniature of the Menologium, here there are deep triangular stains under the eyes of the two women. Looking at this miniature, we are ready to believe that Mesarites did not overstate the expressiveness of the mosaic in the Holy Apostles when he described the Maries watching the grave of Christ: "...the tears gush from their eyes like springs, and...their faces are downcast and dejected and gloomy and full of grief."²⁵⁹ Another manuscript in which we find faces intensely dramatized is the *Penitential Canon* in the Vatican. On folio 6^r, for example, the monks are described in the caption as feeling despair, an emotion which they express not only in their gestures but also in their tightly compressed brows and deeply furrowed foreheads (fig. 10).²⁶⁰ One of the monks, standing on the right, appears to have closed his eyes completely, an expression of weeping which Middle Byzantine artists employed sparingly.²⁶¹

But if this manuscript illustrates how effectively Byzantine artists could portray faces stricken with grief, it also shows up their inability to convey good cheer. For although most of the *Penitential Canon* calls for illustrations which express suffering, the last four verses of the poem speak of gladness as the monks reach the end of their trials. According to the verse written at the top of folio 17^r, the Virgin Mary, appearing in Heaven, instructs the monks to "...throw your dejection far aside, and all take up joy and gladness" (fig. 86).²⁶² The caption at the bottom of the poem describes the supposed reaction of the monks: "These, cheerfully gazing at the Mother of God, joy-

²⁵⁸ *Il Menologio di Basilio II* (note 78 *supra*), 73f., 77, figs. 271, 281. Sorrow was also expressed through thin streaks descending from the eyes in the mid-eleventh-century mosaics at Nea Moni: Matthiae, *I mosaici della Nea Moni* (note 113 *supra*), pls. 21 (a woman at the Crucifixion), 12 (a sister of Lazarus).

²⁵⁹ "...κρουνηδὸν τὰ δάκρυα τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καταχέουσιν...συμπεπτωκότα ταύταις τὰ πρόσωπα καὶ κατηφῇ καὶ στυγνὰ καὶ περίλυπα. Ed. Downey (note 55 *supra*), XXVIII, 5.

²⁶⁰ See *supra*, note 38. These exaggerated facial distortions can be matched in late twelfth-century wall paintings. See, for example, Mary and John in the well-known fresco of the *Threnos* at Nerezi (fig. 80), and their still more intensely dramatized portraits at Kurbinovo (fig. 72): P. Miljković-Pepel, *Nerezi* (Belgrade, 1966), pls. 36, 37; A. Nikolovski, *The Frescoes of Kurbinovo* (Belgrade, 1961), pls. 45, 47. In the fresco of the *Koimesis* at Kurbinovo even the countenance of Christ is sharply distorted to show his grief, a dramatization which must be considered an extreme rarity in this context: Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 182, fig. 179.

²⁶¹ Another striking example is an apostle in the wall painting of the *Koimesis* at Lagoudera: D. C. Winfield, "Reports on Work at Monagri, Lagoudera, and Hagios Neophytos, Cyprus, 1969-70," *DOP*, 25 (1971), 259ff., fig. 16.

²⁶² "...τὴν κατήφειαν
ἀποβαλόντες πόρρω ὑμῶν,
χαρὰν τε καὶ τέρψιν ἀναλάβετε πάντες."
Martin, *Heavenly Ladder*, 142f., fig. 273.

fully receive the good tidings from her.”²⁶³ But in the painting the faces of the brethren are contracted and furrowed; indeed, they can barely be distinguished from those of the suffering penitents on the preceding pages (figs. 10, 86). The Byzantine artist might almost be illustrating the observation of the Renaissance theorist Alberti: “Who would ever believe, if he is not trying it, that it is so difficult for anyone wishing to paint a laughing face to avoid making it more weeping than joyful.”²⁶⁴ It is, indeed, hard to find any laughing or even smiling faces in Middle Byzantine art, but this does not mean that there was no depiction of joy.²⁶⁵ As we have seen, it was not through facial expression that this emotion was conveyed, but through gestures, such as the embrace of Mary and Elizabeth in the Visitation or the gyrations of the angels in the Annunciation (figs. 73, 68).

To sum up, Hellenistic artists had been capable of distinguishing many nuances of facial expression, from sadness to joy, but Byzantine artists retained only the ability to portray emotion in general and misery in particular. The wider scope of Hellenistic art was preserved, however, in the conventions of the *ekphraseis*, which credited Byzantine artists with all the skills of their ancient forerunners. The comparative poverty of Byzantine art with respect to facial expression increased the importance of gesture as a means of communicating emotion.

CONCLUSION

We have seen in the course of this study that Middle Byzantine artists depicted sorrow both through gestures and through facial expression. But whereas there were few variations in facial expression, there was a broader range of gestures, each with a different shade of meaning. The meanings ranged from the pensive resignation of resting the head on the hand to the violent despair of tearing the hair and clothes. It is true that, compared to post-medieval artists, the Byzantines had restricted means at their disposal for conveying emotion. But it could be argued that precisely because the Byzantines knew of a narrower range of techniques than we do each formula carried a proportionately greater meaning for them.²⁶⁶ We should not expect a Byzantine to share a twentieth-century perspective of art history.

For the most part, the gestures and techniques of facial expression found in Byzantine art survived from Antiquity into the Middle Ages as the result of a continual process of transmission. Genuine instances of revivals are rare.

²⁶³ Οὗτοι πρὸς τὴν Θεοτόκον ἱλαρῶς ἀποβλέπον(τες), εὐφροσύνῳ παρ' αὐτῆς τὰ εὐαγγέλια δέχονται. *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ “Et chi mai credesse, se non provando, tanto essere difficile volendo dipigniere uno viso che rida, schifare di non lo fare piu tosto piangioso che lieto?” *Della pittura*, II, ed. H. Janitschek (Vienna, 1877), 121. Even at Kurbinovo it is hard to claim that the artist could do more than achieve a general effect of emotional intensity. Similar distortions of the eyes and cheeks served to express the grief of the Virgin and St. John in the *Threnos*, the fear of the Maries at the Sepulcher, and the expectant age of Adam and Eve in the *Anastasis*: Hadermann-Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, 350, 353, figs. 75, 78, 170.

²⁶⁵ See the observations by Kitzinger, “Hellenistic Heritage” (note 3 *supra*), 110.

²⁶⁶ See E. H. Gombrich, “Expression and Communication,” in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (London, 1965), 56 ff., esp. 62 ff.

The most striking examples of the reintroduction of a classical motif are two eleventh- or twelfth-century ivory caskets in the Walters Art Gallery which portray Adam grieving after the Fall (fig. 14). Here, Adam's posture is based on that of the Hercules by Lysippus (fig. 20), and the basket on which he sits makes a specific reference to the classical statue. But since we find Adam in a similar pose of despondency, only without the basket, in earlier Byzantine portrayals of the scene, this is a clear instance of a revival on the basis of survival (fig. 13).

Middle Byzantine artists did not employ their techniques for depicting sorrow at random. There was a rationale which governed the contexts in which each gesture could appear. Until the thirteenth century, Byzantine artists made a distinction between scenes of the Old and New Testaments, reserving violent gestures of grief for the former and preferring more passive poses for the latter. They distinguished also between specific phases of the New Testament story; thus, the Crucifixion was more reserved than the Lamentation.

The sanctity of the individual figures also controlled the degree of emotion that they displayed. Byzantine artists would have agreed with the dictum of Reynolds: "The joy, or the grief of a character of dignity, is not to be expressed in the same manner as a similar passion in a vulgar face."²⁶⁷ We find no signs of grief in the features or pose of Christ in Middle Byzantine portrayals of the Raising of Lazarus, even though the Bible records that he wept (fig. 35). Byzantine artists inherited this respect for the dignity of sacred characters from Greek art, in which, even in the Hellenistic era, the Gods were not depicted in such extremes of emotion as mortals.²⁶⁸

Although Byzantine artists always tended to treat Gospel subjects with a greater reserve than those drawn from the Old Testament, there was from the end of Iconoclasm an increasing emphasis on the depiction of sorrow in New Testament illustration which manifested itself in several ways. First, additional subjects were developed which stressed the theme of Christ's human death—especially the Deposition and the Lamentation. The introduction of these scenes gave Byzantine artists new opportunities to use traditional techniques for expressing emotion. Second, in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, emphasis was brought to existing scenes, such as the Crucifixion, by the addition of subsidiary mourners. Finally, in the course of the twelfth century, facial expressions became more emphatic. Thus, between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, the gestures and facial distortions which conveyed sorrow in Byzantine art became more visible through repetition and exaggeration, although the basic methods of portraying suffering remained the same throughout the middle period. These techniques constituted a language of sentiment which was shared by all Byzantine artists, even though individual painters may have used it with more or less emphasis or subtlety.

²⁶⁷ *Discourse IV* (London, 1771). The Byzantines also expected their dignitaries in real life to curb their expression of emotion; see, for example, Anna Comnena's descriptions of Alexius and Irene in the *Alexiad*, XIII.1,1, and XV.2,2.

²⁶⁸ W. Deonna, *L'expression des sentiments dans l'art grec* (Paris, 1914), 184f., 196.

The interchange of gestures between different scenes was not always just a matter of artistic convenience, nor of poverty of invention. Sometimes Byzantine artists intentionally used the same pose in two different contexts in order to create a visual link which would correspond with one in theme or subject matter. Thus, the afflicted Israelites in the scene of the Brazen Serpent reflect in their poses the sleeping apostles of the Agony in the Garden (figs. 23, 22), and in the Nativity the holding of the Child by Mary refers forward to the Dormition and the holding of her soul by Christ (fig. 81). The pose of Joseph in the Nativity echoes the attitude of a mourner, and suggests a reference to Christ's death and burial (figs. 29, 19). In the Presentation, the Virgin may already be weeping in anticipation of the Crucifixion (figs. 41, 38). And, as I have shown elsewhere, in scenes of the Incredulity of Thomas Christ's posture may refer back to his suffering on the cross.²⁶⁹ In certain instances artists underlined these parallels by juxtaposing the appropriate scenes.

In making such visual and thematic links, Byzantine artists demonstrated that they were purposeful in their use of gestures of suffering, even if these were stereotyped. The depiction of sorrow in Byzantine art was more than a fossilized remnant of antique culture; it was also a living expression of Byzantine theology. The showing of human feeling in scenes of Christ's life and death was a vivid reminder of his incarnation, a point often made in Byzantine Church literature.²⁷⁰ The embrace was the gesture which most emphatically conveyed Christ's physical humanity, but other expressions of emotion could make the same point.²⁷¹

Throughout this study I have shown that the Byzantine traditions of homilies and church poetry can illuminate the depiction of sentiment in art. Often the artists seem to have followed the writers' lead when they introduced emotive imagery into the Gospel story. In the case of the *Threnos*, the theme of the mother's embrace was elaborated in a ninth-century sermon before it appeared in works of art, and the introduction of violent gestures into New Testament paintings in the thirteenth century was a license which had also been anticipated in the literature. However, in one genre of composition, the *ekphrasis*, the Byzantine artist was supposed to have provided the cues for the writer. In fact, these descriptions have been shown to be a mixture of accurate observation and elaboration inspired by the literary tradition. In some places, the *ekphraseis* have been demonstrated to be strikingly apt when they describe the depiction of emotion in Byzantine art, but in other places they plainly distort and exaggerate for the sake of rhetorical effect.

²⁶⁹ Maguire, "Truth and Convention" (note 2 *supra*), 125ff.

²⁷⁰ St. John Chrysostom and Philagathus, for example, said that Christ wept at the death of Lazarus only sufficiently to display his human nature: see *supra*, notes 101 and 102. See also Romanos' *kontakion*, *On the Raising of Lazarus* II, ed. Maas and Trypanis (note 122 *supra*), XV, strophe 2. Germanus stated that Mary wept over her son's tomb because she was really the mother of Christ: *In Dominici corporis sepulturam*, PG, 98, col. 277C.

²⁷¹ Weitzmann has suggested that in the apse mosaic at Sinai the expressions of pathos on the faces of Elijah and St. John the Baptist were intended to express pictorially the difference between the human and the divine: "The Classical in Byzantine Art" (note 256 *supra*), 172.

Finally, it should be pointed out that it was in the depiction of emotion, and especially of sorrow, that Byzantine artists made some of their most influential and lasting contributions to the history of art. Byzantine techniques for expressing suffering, such as they were, were extensively copied in the West, particularly in the thirteenth century in Germany and Italy.²⁷² A concern for the expression of emotion was one of the most important of the antique legacies which Byzantine artists passed on to the West.

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²⁷² See Demus, *Byzantine Art and the West* (note 5 *supra*), 173ff.; and K. Weitzmann, "Byzantium and the West Around the Year 1200," in *The Year 1200: A Symposium* (New York, 1975), 53–73, esp. 66f.